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The Editors
AFGHANISTAN &
THE SOVIET THREAT

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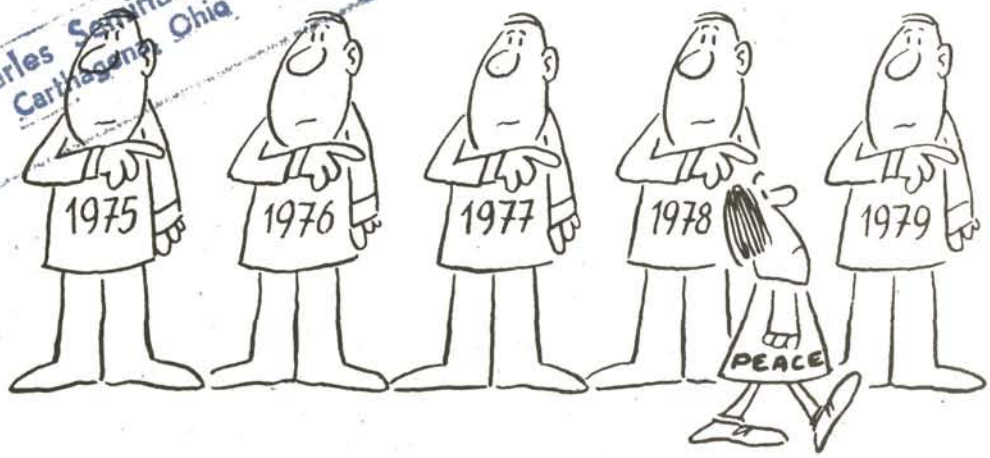

THE P.L.O. & THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

THE OTHER RIGHT-TO-LIFERS

MARY MEEHAN

MARK TAYLOR **BIOGRAPHY: THE APPETITE FOR LIVES**
MARTIN GREEN **DORIS LESSING'S SYNTHETIC MYTH**
THOMAS POWERS **Q. & A. ON IRAN**
LAFE S. ALLEN **DARK HORSE OF A DIFFERENT COLOR**
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Correspondence

Harsh judgment given

Detroit, Mich.

To the Editors: After reading the three articles on SALT II [Dec. 7, 1979], I was disappointed to realize that faith in Jesus's word does not seem to be a dimension of this discussion. This may seem a harsh judgment, but even after a careful re-reading of the articles I find no indication that Jesus came to call us to "repent, and believe the Good News," or that if he did, it could possibly have any bearing on our response to the nuclear arms race and our position on SALT II.

BISHOP THOMAS J. GUMBLETON
Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit

Wisdom gap seen

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: As a secular or diocesan priest, I find it strange that Mr. John Garvey in his article on celibacy [Oct. 26] made no reference to the fact that the celibacy of diocesan priests is not a matter of a vow but of a law of the church. It is an important distinction. Vowed celibacy historically was not associated with the priesthood but with the religious life and even today is so regarded insofar as the vow of a priest who belongs to a religious community is antecedent to, and independent of, his priestly (or diaconal) ordination. For such religious, celibacy, along with poverty and obedience to a rule, is the direct object of their minds and wills.

For the other category of priests, it is not necessarily so. What we (or, at least, I) aimed at was the priesthood. Acceptance of the law of celibacy was a necessary condition for reaching that goal. Knowing that celibacy has never been an essential element of the Christian priesthood, I accepted it as something required at this time and in this society. My celibacy was not my "gift to the church" (to borrow Mr. Garvey's phrase); rather, I accepted the gift of Christ, given as it is according to the present discipline of his church. The discipline of celibacy was accepted, not vowed, when I silently took one step forward in the ordination ceremony of subdiaconate.

Mr. Garvey shared with us readers some valuable insights into the value and meaning of a celibate priesthood, but his omission of the above distinction left a gap which diminished my own appreciation of his wisdom.

(REV.) ROLLINS E. LAMBERT

Bankruptcy exposed

Commerce, Tex.

To the Editors: Why does Robert Hoyt insist on probing Dr. Bernard Nathanson's motivation for writing *Aborting America* [Nov. 9]? His gratuitous allusion to ex-Communist fervor is considerably more than "somewhat invidious." Ditto for "fanatic."

Why is he so reluctant to deal straightforwardly with the reasoning advanced? Is it because Nathanson has exposed the bankruptcy of the argument that abortion is essentially a moral problem?

Nathanson delineates the biological and political dimensions of the issue. Why shouldn't he "offer a societal remedy"? Why exclude any "member of the human community" from society's responsibility?

EDWARD M. CORBETT

Goad kicked

Philadelphia, Pa.

To the Editors: When Robert Hoyt reviews Nathanson's *Aborting American* [Nov. 9], there seems to be some "kicking against the goad." Hoyt's writing seems somewhat tortuous—dare I say tortured. He finds Nathanson impressive in his awakening as to what was happening in the abortion clinic but less impressive "in discussing what is to be done." Hoyt reports Nathanson's desire to change the Supreme Court's '73 ruling, but he (Hoyt) is not pleased with this idea that only when a woman's life is threatened should there be legal recourse to abortion. Instead Hoyt wishes to remind us that in "this economy and this culture . . . some pregnancies that do not threaten health are genuinely catastrophic. . . ."

But then again Hoyt seems not sure, for he suggests that "Nathanson might reply, logically enough, that the injustice borne by some women is less than the one imposed on an aborted fetus, and that a permissive or neutral stance encourages the choice of abortion for the flimsiest, most selfish and anti-social reasons." Now my question is this: Why does Hoyt lead off this insightful objection by putting it on the lips of Nathanson ("Nathanson might reply") rather than this own lips? Is he only dialoguing with Robert Hoyt? His own past writings on the subject indicate to me that he is dialoguing with himself. At one point in past writings he is correcting writers in his own *Christianity and Crisis* (of which he is executive editor) for their failure to deal with abortion from the perspective of the fetus and from the perspective of a social problem rather than merely the individualist perspective of the woman's dilemma. At another point he is rejoicing in a Catholic Sister's view of her church's regulation on abortion as obsolete.

I suppose that Mr. Hoyt would like to reply that this back and forth is simply in function of being in a "middle" position; that it is simply a result of his rejecting as he did in *C & C* both the positions of the A.C.L.U. and the Conference of Catholic Bishops, that it is simply the necessary dialectic of a nuanced sociolegal position regarding the relation between law and morality. My own fear is that Mr. Hoyt's back and forth is less a critical dialectic and more a dialectic of the spectator. In social issues to be a spectator and to remain a spectator is ultimately to affirm the status quo. Mr. Hoyt has demonstrated that he knows better than most that in the social issue and the sociolegal issue on abortion there is simply no neutral middle ground to speak of. He cannot simply object that "sound morality and sound law must

(Continued on page 28)

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Contents

Volume CVII, Number 1

Correspondence	2
Editorials	3
John Who? : *Lafe F. Allen*	5
Q. & A. on Iran: *Thomas Powers*	7
Truth or consequences: *John Garvey*	8
The P.L.O. & the democratic Left: *Michael Harrington*	10
The other right-to-lifers: *Mary Meehan*	13
Screen: *Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.*	16
The appetite for lives: *Mark Taylor*	18

Books

Shikasta: *Martin Green*	22
Thomas Merton: Monk and Poet: *Bernard Bergonzi*	23
Godel, Escher, Bach: *James Gips*	24
O Holy Mountain!: *Eric Cochrane*	26

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Publisher: Edward S. Skillin

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AFGHANISTAN & THE SOVIET THREAT

JUST BEFORE midnight on January 4,as President Carter approached a snowy Camp David, the presidential limousine went into a skid. Control was regained in an instant, but the image is an apt one to retain for the international situation that earlier the same evening the president had addressed on nationwide TV. The president, the nation, the world are skidding; whether toward some routine denting or toward the worst conceivable tragedy, no one knows. To take us out of the skid requires action, but as every driver knows, not too much or too fast. The embargo on high technology and grain, the postponement of SALT, and the rallying of opposition in the United Nations were responsible first steps in reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. But what next?

What next obviously depends on what one thinks has happened. For some time a fierce debate has been raging about American policy toward the Soviet Union. The protagonists in this debate have been what one writer in the Winter issue of *Foreign Policy* called "the anti-Soviet brigade," a coalition of neoconservatives concerned about the loss of military and moral strength in the West, old-fashioned crusading anti-Communists, and liberals protesting Moscow's domestic repression. The coalition has hit hard at SALT, but the real issues, as some of the critics readily admit, are so broad that the specifics of SALT are virtually irrelevant.

In this view, the Soviet Union is engaged in a dogged effort to attain strategic superiority over the U.S.—indeed, has probably attained it already. Wielding such superiority, it is embarking on a global policy of aggression, intervening directly, using Cuban proxies, or simply forcing accommodation by fear of the consequences. "Finlandization" is the word that has taken over from "domino theory" in the vocabulary of this outlook. As significant as its view of the USSR, however, is the "anti-Soviet brigade's" view of the U.S. By rejecting various arms systems like the B-1 bomber or the neutron bomb, by delaying the MX system, by undermining anti-Communist but authoritarian regimes with preachments about human rights, by inhibiting covert action or refusing further military involvement in places like Angola, Nicaragua, and Iran, Washington has exhibited a "failure of nerve" and encouraged the Soviet Union's ambitions. Seen from this viewpoint, recent international developments have been almost nothing but one long string of defeats for the West. Afghanistan is only confirmation.

There is a polar view, of course, which focuses virtually no attention on Soviet actions at all but only on those of America's military. Each proposal, to develop new weapons systems, reinstitute the draft, create a mobile force for swift intervention, or increase defense spending, is seen as either sheer wastefulness or the resurrection of the "global policeman" role that not only led us into Vietnam but bears much of the responsibility for current tragedies—Exhibit A: Cambodia; Exhibit B: Iran.

The Carter administration has not taken either of these views; in fact, it has been

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charged, with some justification, of taking no view at all of U.S.-USSR relations but of swinging inconsistently between conciliation and confrontation, the former identified with Mr. Vance, the latter with Mr. Brzezinski. Behind it all there was something of a policy choice, however. That was to deemphasize concern with the Soviets altogether and give more attention to regional problems in their own terms. This was to break with Kissinger's bi-polar worldview in which everything was "linked" to the central issue of the U.S.-USSR equilibrium. It was inevitably to alarm the "anti-Soviet brigade" because it rejected the conviction that conflicts all over the world were always "tests" of will or arms between Moscow and Washington. Claims to the contrary notwithstanding, this attitude appears to have allowed the flexibility necessary for some notable foreign policy successes; in the Middle East and in Southern Africa, embryonic settlements have removed vast opportunities for Soviet mischief. In Latin America, the administration has loosened the identification of the U.S. with authoritarian regimes whose days may be numbered.

But Afghanistan does force a reappraisal of this position, which is what President Carter was no doubt signaling with his somewhat startling remark about being suddenly educated in the matter of Soviet intentions. To be sure, there are ways of looking at the Soviet invasion that reduce its significance. The Russian concern about Afghanistan has deep historical roots. Moscow had understandable fears about the effects of a victorious insurgency flying the banner of Moslem revivalism on its own vast Moslem population. The strongman it excised was something of an Afghan Pol Pot. And one can find historical precedents to qualify the appearance of a totally new departure in Soviet policy: just as Moscow invaded Hungary while the West was tied up with Suez, so it struck in Afghanistan even as America was entangled in Iran. And hasn't the U.S. intervened in Cuba, in the Dominican Republic, in Vietnam?

Little comfort, however, and possibly much self-deception can be derived from such arguments. The fact is that the Soviets' massive military intervention beyond the lines drawn after World War II is a new departure, and whatever can be said about Russia's concerns for its borders or its Moslem population would justify a full-scale military move into Iran just as logically. The U.S. has in fact given up its own penchant for military actions of this sort; we never acted so suddenly in Vietnam—an important consideration in a world of nuclear buttons—nor, for all the folly of the Bay of Pigs, did we invade Cuba. Most importantly, the Soviet Union has generally been shy of this kind of crisis-provocation. Are we seeing a distinct change in Soviet leadership—the sexagenarians taking over from the septuagenarians? The military leadership, too, have had a lot of experience recently fighting or "advising" overseas—in the Horn of Africa, South Yemen, Iraq. All this is tied to what *both* the "anti-Soviet brigade" and the administration have recognized as a potential "crisis of the eighties," a period when external Soviet might may be paralleled with extreme internal Soviet instability—the non-Russian nationalities are growing, the economy continues to stumble, average life expectancy is decreasing, and infant mortality on the rise.

The problem can be seen on three levels. On the world diplomatic level, the Soviets have probably dealt themselves a defeat. Even if they are not mired down in Afghan as the U.S. was in Vietnam—and the evidence is that they won't be—they have presented a new face to the Third World. On the regional level, however, they have demonstrated a military will and capacity that can be equally turned against the West's oil supply. And on the level of East-West strategic balance, they have revealed an adventurousness, a taste for the *fait accompli*, that could lead to nuclear miscalculation and conflagration.

Is the answer simply more counter-force? To confront this problem and not to consider the question of armaments is to be totally unserious. Despite the wishes of many, non-pacifists as well as pacifists, peace is not always the product of disarming—and can be the product of arms. Counter-force is an answer, but not *simply* counter-force, and not *only* counter-force. Unfortunately, most of the specific proposals, whether urged by the administration or the "anti-Soviet brigade," don't fit the need. First is the notion, to which Nixon's phrase applies perfectly, of "throwing money at problems"—increasing defense spending five percent regardless of what we are buying. Second is the MX which still smacks of Rube Goldberg. Third is unqualified backing of the Shahs, the Somozas, the Parks, the Marcoses, the Zias—as long as they are on our side and on their feet, which recent history ought to warn us may not be too long.

The immediate need is to prevent Soviet hegemony over the West's oil supply. That will require careful diplomacy, a military presence in the region, and (despite the dangers it entails) a long-range American striking force. The long-run need is to restabilize the strategic balance. That seems as likely to require disarmament as new weapons—the hard pursuit of SALT and bargaining over Euromissiles. Both immediate and long-run is the need to decrease our energy vulnerability. Our greatest weakness overseas remains economic and energy mismanagement at home. On top of it all, we need to escape the trap of returning to a totally bi-polar picture of world politics even while we concentrate our national mind on the Soviet Union's new challenge.

MORE ON 'JOHN WHO?'

Elsewhere in this issue there appears a political profile of John Who? otherwise known as Republican presidential candidate Congressman John B. Anderson of Illinois. Despite years of public service, Mr. Anderson is relatively little known at the moment, but it is not impossible that the up-coming New Hampshire primary may change that. With his rivals for the GOP nomination splitting the conservative votes, say Anderson supporters, their man has a good chance of pulling all of the state's moderate and liberal Republican voters. If he does and if he can match that performance in the next primary in Massachusetts—admittedly two big ifs—he will overnight

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become a real contender. There is a good bit of wishful thinking in this scenario, of course; more than any other GOP candidate, John Anderson is a man who would attract the independent and Democratic votes any Republican candidate must have to win in the general election. But given the usual GOP death wish, will a candidate with this ability be considered too liberal by the Republican faithful?

The only Anderson position that has attracted some national attention and that is typical of the man's innovative and courageous approach is his proposal for a tax of 50-cents-per-gallon on gasoline and diesel fuel, raising $61 billion a year, matched by a 50 percent cut in workers' Social Security taxes and a more modest cut in the employers' payroll tax. The case for the Anderson proposal is strong. Studies indicate that raising the price of gasoline by 50 cents per gallon would reduce consumption by almost ten percent or 700,000 barrels a day right now, and by almost 3 million barrels in ten years' time. This may not seem like much when you consider that the United States imports some 8 million barrels of oil a day, but it is enough to reduce demand sufficiently that the OPEC nations could not raise prices at will. Higher gasoline prices would have a serious impact on the poor, but this would be offset by the cuts in Social Security taxes, which would be substantial, and, if there is still a surplus, in income taxes as well. The drawback that would still remain is the inflationary effect of such a rise in the price of gas, and advocates of the new tax grant this, but they argue that it is still better that the price rise remain in the United States rather than dribble out little by little to the OPEC nations. The only feasible alternative, they say, is mandatory gasoline rationing, and Congress seems to have no stomach for that. No doubt more will be heard of this argument when Congress reconvenes; the *New York Times* and others favor still another version of a substantial tax on gasoline, with the impact on the poor cushioned in a different fashion. Be that as it may, as far as Mr. Anderson is concerned, we hope the Republican voters of New Hampshire reward him for talking sense in his campaign by turning him from John Who? into plain John Anderson, serious Republican candidate.

The campaign

JOHN WHO?

DARK HORSE OF A DIFFERENT COLOR

JOHN B. ANDERSON may have a higher recognition rating than Earl Vern Blackjack Stevens, Prophet Elijah or Lord Robert Benedict—who are also candidates for the presidency—but his name is scarcely a household word.

For example, only 22 percent of 1,555 adults questioned in a Gallup Poll last September had ever heard of the liberal Republican Congressman from Rockford, Illinois. Even perennial presidential hopeful Harold Stassen was recognized by 42 percent of those polled.

Not only does John Anderson's name fail to ring a bell with most Americans, but some who do know him don't take his candidacy seriously—they think *he's* too serious. They point, for example, to his advocacy of a 50-cents-a-gallon tax on gasoline to substantiate their belief. "Anderson," the *Chicago Tribune* observed, "is candidly facing up to a serious unpleasant reality with an eminently workable if admittedly painful solution, just as he'd have to do as president . . . No wonder so many political writers say he isn't a 'serious candidate.' "

The son of a Swedish immigrant who ran a grocery store in Rockford, Illinois, John Anderson is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Illinois, where he earned both his undergraduate and law degrees. He later received a Masters of Law degree at Harvard; served two-and-one-half years in the U.S. Army during World War II; and after a stint in the U.S. Foreign Service, as a staff advisor to the United States High Commissioner for Germany in West Berlin, returned home to Rockford in 1955 to practice law. He was elected state's attorney, and then successfully ran for Congress in 1960. In January 1969, after a vigorous campaign, Anderson was elected by his House Republican colleagues to succeed Melvin R. Laird as Chairman of the House Republican Conference—the third highest job in the House Republican hierarchy.

There was nothing in this early congressional career to presage what Anderson's more conservative Republican brethren were later to consider party apostasy in the first degree. He dutifully opposed, for example, President John F. Kennedy's plan to create a new department for Housing and Urban Development and fought all Democratic proposals to expand federal welfare programs and increase assistance to the cities. To emphasize his devotion to the conservative cause, Anderson, a superb public speaker, was a member of the so-called "Paul Revere Team" which criss-crossed the country in 1964 drumming up votes for the Republican's ultra-conservative presidential candidate, Barry Goldwater.

Anderson was fittingly rewarded for his true-blue conservatism when the right-wing Americans for Constitutional Action gave him a whopping 88 percent approval rating over his first six years in office. (In 1978, the same organization dropped Anderson to a 44 percent rating—21 points lower than the 65 percent approval rating the liberal Americans for Democratic Action gave him.)

Although he denies undergoing the road-to-Damascus conversion of Saint Paul, Anderson did have a change of political heart in the mid to late '60s. He attributed his turn leftward to a "process of maturation. The longer you serve, the more you realize what you try to do is reconcile the view of your district with the larger goal of trying to be aware of issues of a national scale."

This larger goal—at least for him—included protesting the war in Vietnam; supporting freedom of choice on abortion; opposing the death penalty; favoring extension of the Equal Rights Amendment. He's for gun control; against school prayers. He favors increased federal aid to education, an expanded food stamp program, consumer protection. He voted

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against additional appropriations for the B-1 bomber and he's opposed to building the MX missile. He's the only one of the Republican presidential hopefuls who actively supports SALT II, and he was a strong supporter of the Panama Canal treaties. Anderson recently spoke and voted against the proposed Constitutional amendment to ban busing for purposes of school desegregation, winning editorial praise from the *New York Times* for "his willingness to rise above partisanship on an incendiary issue."

"I don't care whether you call me a conservative or a liberal," he says, "so long as you give me credit for having ideas."

Having ideas, however, doesn't do much good if they go unreported—which is what happens too often to many of Anderson's thoughts. But his idea for a 50-cents-a-gallon gas tax is one which is getting wide attention—especially on the editorial pages. Such a levy—he calls it an "emergency conservation tax"—could reduce our gasoline consumption by 5 to 10 percent, he argues, and save 365,000 to 730,000 barrels of fuel per day for more critical uses like heating homes. Reducing consumption would also reduce our dependence on foreign supplies.

Anderson readily concedes that a 50-cents-a-gallon levy would be a heavy tax indeed, one we ought not even consider unless its proceeds—estimated at $50 billion to $60 billion a year—can be recycled immediately to the taxpayer. He would achieve this return by funneling the new tax collections into the Social Security trust funds, thereby financing substantial cutbacks in existing payroll taxes. Those not in the Social Security system would get offsetting tax relief in other ways.

Anderson believes the U.S. has a choice:

"We can tax ourselves in the form of a higher gasoline tax, or we can allow OPEC to tax us in the form of higher and higher crude oil prices. I make this proposal because it is critically important that we reduce our dependence on foreign oil not in 1990, or 1985, or next year—but now."

Anderson's also for a windfall profits tax to finance energy conservation and to expedite technological and commercial development of alternative energy sources. He says we need to deregulate the pricing and allocation of gasoline, just as we are now deregulating the price of domestic crude oil. He favors establishing a new International Energy Development Agency to provide low-interest loans and technical assistance to non-OPEC countries for the exploration and commercial development of their oil, natural gas, and coal reserves.

NEXT: Special Issue on Theology

"The Responsibility of Theologians" by Bernard J. Cooke looks behind and beyond the turmoil over Hans Küng and Eduard Schillebeeckx.

"Is the Church an Idol?" A statement by Charles Davis—with comments by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Richard John Neuhaus, John L. McKenzie, Dolores Leckey, Philip J. Murnion, and Martin E. Marty.

Anderson believes we need to develop in cooperation with Japan and Western Europe an appropriate response to OPEC, including accelerated conservation measures, an expansion of our strategic petroleum reserves, a policy of energy proliferation in the non-OPEC nations of the third world, joint research into alternative energy technologies, and finally a joint counter-cartel strategy that would give non-OPEC oil preferred access to our markets by imposing tariffs or some other mutually agreeable restrictions on OPEC oil.

In the economic area, Anderson notes there are those today who would offer up balanced budgets and large tax cuts as "magical panaceas" for the country's economic ills. He concedes that the need to bring federal receipts and outlays into balance is critical, but he adds:

"In itself a balanced budget will not reverse this country's long-term decline in productivity growth, or the resulting decline in the growth of real income. Tax policies, and especially tax cuts, can play a very essential role in reinvigorating the private sector, but tax cuts do not balance budgets. Moreover, to the extent that they merely encourage taxpayers to spend more and go deeper into debt, they are clearly inflationary in today's economic environment."

The kinds of tax cuts Anderson favors are specifically tailored—they would exclude from adjusted gross income a certain amount of interest income. He thinks people ought to be able to exclude from taxable income money they intend to use as the down payment on a home. "That's the kind of very carefully structured tax relief needed rather than the old-style, across the board reduction that is designed to generate more consumption. The emphasis in this country has to be on investment and not simply consumption."

While he favors a balanced budget, Anderson declares he's not going to do his balancing act "on the backs of the poor. I'm not going to cut back on food stamps, unemployment compensation and other programs that are basic in achieving at least a minimum level of decency for the American people."

Noting that only about one out of four registered voters in the U.S. today is a Republican, Anderson argues that the GOP has to become "coalition minded" if it hopes to win the White House again. Anderson projects himself as a Republican Democrats could happily vote for—assuming the unlikely fact that his party will give them a chance to do so. If he accomplishes nothing else in his campaign, he hopes he can educate his fellow Republicans that they simply have to reach out to blacks, women, social activists, the blue-collar worker, the under-privileged—to show them that the GOP can be progressive and innovative and interested in their problems.

Anderson has frequently been mentioned as an ideal vice-presidential candidate on the Republican ticket. He doesn't conclusively rule out that possibility but considers it "highly improbable" that he would be a candidate for the vice-presidency; he adds that it is not the "sort of challenge that led me to give up my career in the House and seek the nomination for president."

Anderson is entering primaries where he has hopes of winning moderate-to-liberal Republican votes while his conserva-

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tive rivals are carving each other up trying to garner the right-wing vote. He's as pleased as punch with all those Republican opponents to his right—nine at last count, and Jerry Ford ready to accept the mantle if his party becomes stalemated in Detroit next July.

Anderson's campaign manager, Ambassador William Bradford, who recently left the U.S. Foreign Service after twenty-seven years as a diplomat, says Anderson hopes to "win, place or show" in the New Hampshire primary February 26, and do the same thing a week later in neighboring Massachusetts. Then, with these respectable showings in New England under his belt, he would head into his native midwest for the important Illinois primary March 18, followed by the Wisconsin primary April 1.

Anderson reminds whoever will listen that he's not a "political neophyte. I have won ten elections to Congress. On six occasions I was elected as the third ranking Republican in the House of Representatives. I have, in fact, never lost a political contest. I do not intend to lose now."

LAFE F. ALLEN

Of several minds: *Thomas Powers*

Q. & A. ON IRAN

CAN WE GET OUT WITH A WHOLE SKIN?

WHERE is Iran?

A long way from the United States, and walking distance from the Soviet Union.

What is the Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini up to?

Those who know aren't saying, and his actions do not yet form a pattern sufficiently clear to announce itself. It is not even certain if he ordered the U.S. Embassy takeover in Tehran, or was taken by surprise, like the rest of us. Some analysts think his handling of the crisis betrays the desperation of a leader trying to distract his people from the reality of a fragile country rapidly slipping towards social and economic chaos, with famine, anarchy and civil war waiting in the wings. Others suggest he is pursuing a messianic ambition to rally all Islam around himself.

The confusion stems from the fact that he is demanding something—the body of the Shah—which is entirely symbolic, and therefore too trivial to justify such awful risks. Khomeini already has what matters—power. The Shah is a frail old man, and his personal fortune, however ill-begotten, cannot amount to much beside the funds frozen by U.S. banks. On a cost-effectiveness basis the Ayatollah's demands don't make sense, which suggests he is really after something else. Whatever his true goal, it is something we can't or shouldn't deliver.

What did the Shah get for the billions he spent on modern arms?

Stories coming out of the Pentagon suggest the answer is not much, but I'm not sure they ought to be trusted. We are told that the Shah's army is breaking up, that the officers are demoralized or divided, that the soldiers are deserting, that the men still in uniform refuse to obey orders, that the lingering "backwardness" of Iran is causing a logistical breakdown, that modern helicopters, hovercraft, and jet fighters have been disabled by lack of maintenance. Doubtless some of this is true. It is just what happened to the South Vietnamese army, after all, which had also been force-fed huge inventories of modern arms. It is also true that the Shah's army proved useless when it came to defending his throne.

But the drift of the Pentagon stories seems to be that U.S. forces would find the going easy, if President Carter were to decide to intervene. This I very much doubt. The question here is whether the Iranians would resist, not whether their troops could defeat our troops in a set-piece battle. The U.S. won any number of set-piece battles in Vietnam, and ought to have learned to distinguish the battles from the war. The Iranians might disband their army altogether, and still prove a lump impossible to swallow. The United States, unlike the Soviet Union, has shown it has no appetite for occupying and holding a hostile nation. The American military sometimes sounds as if it took this to be a weakness on our part, but I can't help thinking it's all bluster. There is something in us that rebels at the prospect of holding a people in thrall. Our real enthusiasm is for getting out, not for going in.

Could the Israelis do it?

Entebbe Airport was not in downtown Kampala. The Israeli raiding party flew over a country which elected not to sound the alarm—Kenya—and then attacked a tiny group of Palestinians which was holding its hostages in an airport terminal, not a walled embassy compound held by hundreds of armed students. Back in 1964 the CIA briefly contemplated a lightning raid to rescue five Americans held captive by Simba rebels in Stanleyville, the Congo, but rejected the proposal as impractical. The American military's raid on a North Vietnamese prisoner-of-war camp at Son Tay would have succeeded if the prisoners had still been there, but Son Tay was in the middle of nowhere and the prisoners would have been in separate cells, making it impossible for their captors to kill them en masse. What this all adds up to is a conclusion the Israelis couldn't do it either, and that the United States has no real military option in the present crisis, unless we want to consider some sort of violent retribution an option. We can drop bombs just about anywhere on earth, and so far it hasn't done us much good.

Is it all our fault?

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Public comment on the crisis has so far centered on the fact that the U.S. hostages are being held illegally. Even the Iranians seem to recognize this fact, which is why they have charged the hostages with being spies. Of course this cannot alter the fact they enjoy—a certain bitter irony there—the privileges of diplomatic immunity, or the fact they were granted immunity by the very government which is now illegally holding them, but it's clear the Iranians are groping for the color of law. One result of the clarity of the situation is that we have forgone the self-questioning which accompanied so much of what happened in Indochina, and one result of that, I suspect, is a half-guilty suspicion recent history won't bear looking into.

The United States, through the CIA, restored the Shah to power in 1953 after he had fled the country in a moment of funk. We almost certainly should have left him to gilded exile in Rome. Our reasons for overthrowing Mohammed Mossadegh—that he was too close to the Communists, that he planned to nationalize Iranian oil—were too shallow in the first instance, and shortsighted in the second. The Shah nationalized the oil anyway, and then tripled the price in 1973. The Iranians have charged the Shah with being a virtual puppet of the United States, a cringing, timid figure, for all his megalomania, who didn't just take but humbly solicited his orders from the American ambassador. His secret police, the SAVAK, was the invention of the CIA, which tutored it in computerized file-keeping and the mechanics of torture. The Shah's military ambitions, it is said, were an American inspiration to recapture oil dollars, support the U.S. arms industry, and build a bulwark between the Soviet Union and the Persian Gulf.

This sounds, in fact, more than a little like the relationship between the Soviet Union and East Germany, whose membership in the Warsaw pact, foreign policy, and repression of internal dissent are all mandated by Moscow. The difference, I think, has to do with the organs of control. Russia militarily occupies its clients in Eastern Europe, and is willing to crush revolt with tanks. When the Ayatollah toppled the Shah we stood on the sidelines, urging moderation and reform. This suggests that the relationship between the United States and Iran was entirely a political one, that the Shah was free to take our advice or leave it, as he liked; and that what happened in Iran was fundamentally the doing of Iranians. We supported a man whose rule was in some respects a brutal tyranny, and are culpable, just as other countries are when they do the same thing. This is, in fact, distressingly common. We might even call it universal. But culpability is not the same thing as responsibility. It was the Shah, not the U.S. Ambassador, who tyrannized over Iran. If the Ayatollah felt the U.S. role had been insupportable, then he should have broken relations and expelled all U.S. nationals. What he did instead, is not our fault.

Who will win their freedom first—the Lithuanians, or the Azerbaijanis?

It is apparently the destiny of these peoples to tremble on the edge of Russia, or be absorbed within it. Neither is ever going to be "free." The Soviet Union has been supporting Khomeini. The Soviet Union retains certain rights of intervention from a treaty with Iran of the 1920s. The Soviet Union occupied Azerbaijan during the Second World War and withdrew only under pressure from the United States. Does this sound to you as if the Azerbaijanis could break with Khomeini's Iran without inviting Russian intervention? Some Americans take pleasure in the separatist tendencies of the Kurds, the Azerbaijanis, the Arabs along the Gulf, and other minorities in Iran, as if their defection might topple the Ayatollah without any other consequences. But if Iran really starts to break apart, somebody will move in.

Is the crisis in Iran a tempest in a teapot?

Let's hope so. The United States and the Soviet Union both seem to be run by sober men with a sense of balance, but the crisis in Iran offers the sort of rewards which can turn men's heads. The best the United States can hope for is to get out with a whole skin, by which we ought to mean not only our hostages but the reimposition of order in Iran, supported by a robust and well-run oil industry. What the Russians might get out of it is almost certainly being debated in Washington at this very moment by men poring over large maps as they spin out awful scenarios: the Soviets consolidate their control of Afghanistan, occupy Iran down to the Gulf under a 99-year friendship treaty with the Ayatollah guaranteeing complete religious freedom to Shiite Moslems and political freedom to the Tudeh party, thereby ending Soviet oil supply problems for the rest of the century, and putting a lump in the throat of everyone on the Arabian peninsula. Iran is the largest country to suffer a revolution since China, and in some ways it's even more important. At the moment it really does seem to be coming apart. The American fleets in the Mediterranean and the Arabian Sea are not intended to impress the Ayatollah so much as they are, one suspects, the Russians.

But perhaps it will all blow over.

THOMAS POWERS

Of several minds: *John Garvey*

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

COMMITTING A MORAL ABSOLUTE

TOWARD THE BEGINNING of the Iranian crisis I was talking to a man who believed strongly that immediate punitive action was necessary: unless we made Iran hurt — and this hurting had to be obvious — we would be sitting ducks in a world full of reasonable grudges against America. If the lives of the hostages were lost in the process, too bad; their lives are less important than an international realization that America can't be taken on so cheaply. This reali-

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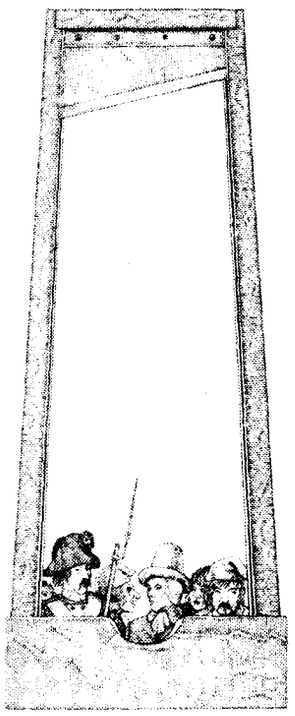
zation would preserve more lives in the long run than would be lost because of our show of strength.

George Will has defended this line of thinking as well as it can be defended. It appalls me in just about every way; but it haunts me too, since most liberal and left-wing answers to it are deficient. The same deficiency shows up in a number of other places, for instance in the way we talk about Vietnam, or capital punishment, or abortion. This came home to me during a hearing of the Illinois house, which was debating the reinstitution of capital punishment. A lawyer from the ACLU (we will call him Mr. Wimp) was being interrogated by a thick-necked, red-faced legislator from a Chicago suburb, who described a particularly brutal rape and then leaned forward to ask, "Mr. Wimp. do you mean to tell me that this animal should be allowed to live, and we should pay his room and board for the rest of his life?" He exaggerated his incredulity, of course, because he knows that this is exactly what Wimp meant to tell him, pointing out along the way that capital punishment was not a deterrent, or at least that its deterrent value had not been proven; that capital punishment was inflicted disproportionately on poor people and members of racial minorities; that it might even cause crime, since if you know that for one murder you will be fried, why not commit another? All sound reasons. Then another legislator, not at all a John Wayne sort, asked Mr. Wimp a very good question: if the deterrent value of capital punishment were proven, and if it were more evenly distributed across class and color lines, would he then support it? The answer wasn't an answer — just a stammer of sorts, a repetition of belief that there was no such evidence and no real way of gathering it — and as I listened I realized that what had happened was typical of a lot of liberal thought. Any time we are in danger of committing a moral absolute we scramble wildly in every other direction — let's see, where's the evidence, hand me those statistics — because it seems so damned unenlightened and even stuffy to say "I am against capital punishment because a decent society does not kill people, even it if works." This declaration leads to the sensible question, why not, to which there is finally one answer: because human life is holy.

Mr. Wimp probably hates words like "holy," but knows in some gloomy recess of his soul (he probably hates words like soul, too) that even if capital punishment were a proven deterrent, he would still oppose it, but he isn't sure why. Since there can be no absolutes — this is an article of his faith — he must find sensible reasons, reasons which can be backed up with evidence, for his belief that capital punishment is wrong, that we should not have done what we did in Vietnam, that we should not drop bombs on Iran.

But what if the evidence goes the other way? That's inconceivable; it isn't allowed to point in any uncomfortable direction. But that rubs us up against an absolute again.

People who believe power can be used compassionately often make an assumption which is a hybrid of Christian puritanism and the rationalism of the enlightenment. The assumption, loosely stated, is that what is right will be socially valuable. It will have a practical application which will work out to the political advantage of everyone. The negative side of this assumption is that what we know to be bad (violence, coercion, threats, deception) will not work well in the practical realm. Virtue will succeed, vice will fail.



What if our opponents are right? What if capital punishment does deter crime, abortion does relieve some burdens, and strong military action does prevent the rise of certain forms of tyranny? I am not arguing that practical arguments for doing what is right should be discarded. What I am suggesting is this: it may be that there are instances where doing what is right means that you will not succeed; you will lose, and suffer for it. Our streets may be less safe because our system of justice tries to be fair. Our country may be weaker, and is certainly perceived as a weaker country, because of our defeat in Vietnam. And if we do not try to build up our weapons systems, we may in fact wind up weaker than our enemies. We seem to want it both ways — to be as strong and respected as Rome, but not pagan; to be safe, and free; to be good, and powerful.

Our ideas of good and evil are the legacies of people who believed in absolutes. Our society is not allowed to admit them. Insofar as this prevents us from living under a theocracy or any unquestionable orthodoxy, it is a good thing. But it leaves a hole which needs filling. The ancient Greeks, Jews, and Christians were able to consider the possibility that virtue might mean dying, and that there might be instances under which survival and safety could only be had through treacherous means. We can't discuss such issues as nuclear disarmament, captal punishment, abortion, the use of force, or the obligations of rich nations to poor ones, in any significant way if our strongest argument is that the right course of action is necessarily the most practical one. What if it isn't, our opponents ask? In a society with no feeling for absolutes we are tongue-tied. It can even come to this: in a situation where we can play one of two roles, victim and victimizer, the right thing is to be the victim. This was the triumph of the mother of the seven brothers whose story is told in Maccabees; it is the cross. In the only reading our culture allows, it doesn't get you anywhere. JOHN GARVEY

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ARE SOCIALIST LEADERS COMPROMISING WITH TERRORISM?

The P.L.O. & the democratic Left

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

ESTORIL, a resort half an hour's drive from Lisbon, is a European classic with its casino and aging luxury hotels. One of those hotels, the Palacio, is supposed to have been a meeting place for spies during World War II and it looks the part. In late October, it was the site of an assemblage much less in keeping with its slightly faded elegance: a meeting of the Bureau of the Socialist International at which there was a spirited, and sometimes acrimonious, debate over the issue of Israel, the Palestinians, and peace in the Middle East.

The Palestinian question, *El Pais* of Madrid reported, was the most heated item on the agenda of the Bureau. And a member of the central committee of the Palestinian Liberation Organization who was in Lisbon at the time (but did not attend the meeting) told *Portugal Hoje* that Yassir Arafat's contacts last July with Willy Brandt, the International's president, and Bruno Kreisky, a vice president, were extremely important to his organization. Indeed, the immediate cause of the debate in Estoril was disagreement within the International over that meeting.

Do these events mark a basic shift in the orientation of democratic socialists in Europe? Has Brandt had a change of heart and, in the words of *Business Week*, "shown an unusual tolerance . . . for movements among the [developing nations] that are nondemocratic . . ."? Or worse, has the International, as one Cold War socialist put it in *Commentary*, "completely revised its policies concerning the basic issues of Communism, peace, and political liberty"? If that were the case, it would signal a momentous transition, the desertion of the mass European Left from principles it has defended for more than a century.

I do not think the events at Estoril support that grim conclusion. To explain why requires that I make a considerable historical detour before returning to those discussions on the Middle East. For the latter must be placed in a context which is much more complex than Cold War abstractions—or Marxist-Leninist ones, for that matter—suggest.

The actions of the socialists, in any case, have a wide significance. The problems facing the International at Estoril are very much like those that will face any thoughtful citizens and leaders trying to overcome Cold War legacies, respond adequately to the Third World, and do justice to the dangers and complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

THE PRESENT Socialist International is the fourth incarnation of an organization which dates back to the International Workingmen's Association, the group addressed by Karl Marx at its founding Congress in 1864. It is quite different from its three predecessors, which is of historical interest—and quite different from what it was at the time of its constitution in 1951, which has political bearing on the Middle East controversy at Estoril. The International was organized in the darkest days of the Cold War. Indeed, one of the important political moves which led to its rebirth in 1951 was the exclusion of the Italian Socialist Party of Pietro Nenni in 1949 because of its united front with the Italian Communists (the Italian party has long since returned to the International).

So it was that the Declaration of Principles adopted by the new International at Frankfurt in 1951 not only attacked capitalism but also sharply counterposed itself to the "new imperialism" of Communism. The Declaration also stated a generalized solidarity with the Third World but in political reality it was completely Europe-centered. Even then there were, to be sure, differences within an International which largely acted on consensus principles, but they rarely came out in the open. I participated in one of those rare occasions, a meeting of the Executive Committee of the International Union of Socialist Youth in Berlin in 1959 where we voted to condemn the French socialist policy against Algerian independence.

In 1963 at the Amsterdam Congress of the International, the delegates were quite frank about the way in which the Cold War had dominated their thinking and actions. It was the time

MICHAEL HARRINGTON *is Chairman of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee. His most recent book is* The Vast Majority *(Simon and Schuster).*

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of the Moscow Test Ban Treaty and détente was opening up new perspectives. One of the bluntest of the participants was Paul-Henri Spaak, the Belgian socialist who had been Secretary General of NATO. The Cold War, he said, made us do things that we were unhappy about, but which were necessary. Now that there is the possibility of a negotiated settlement of some of the East-West differences, he concluded, we can be much truer to our principles. And in 1969 other changes were visible at the Eastbourne Congress where the International discussed whether, and how, it could bring the New Left youth into a movement dominated by an older generation.

But even though the International changed in those years, it was mainly a paper organization (a drawer in the desk of the British Labor Party's international secretary, one wag dubbed it). The really significant change came in 1975-76. It had to do with policy and personnel, and it relates directly to the discussions in Portugal about the Middle East.

AT THE GENEVA Congress of the International in 1976, Brandt took over as the organization's president. He did so only after he had received firm promises from the leaders of the major parties that they would personally participate in the International's work and not leave its activities to middle-level technocrats on the party payroll. And he insisted that the International had to break out of the white, European ghetto in which it found itself, demonstrating a relevance to the Third World.

On that last count, Brandt was obviously painfully aware of the dilemmas which such a turn would involve. The International was, and is, committed to political democracy, to democratic socialism. If it—along with liberals and even conservatives in the West—has changed its attitude on negotiating with the Russians, a shift symbolized in Brandt's Ostpolitik when he was West German chancellor, it has not abandoned its democratic conception of socialism in any way. And yet, in the Third World, particularly in Africa, most anti-capitalist states allow only one party, which rules. This is not simply true of the "Marxist-Leninist" regimes; it also holds for Julius Nyerere's Tanzania. In Latin America, there are multi-party systems and some illegal and semi-legal socialist parties in *de facto* one-party republics. But in Asia, outside of Japan and Australia-New Zealand, the very idea of democratic socialism has hardly any roots at all.

If, then, the International was to develop any relevance to, and relations with, the Third World it would clearly have to enter into dialogue with movements which, to a greater or lesser degree, disagreed with it on questions of basic principle. There was an obvious risk involved. The International, Shimon Peres said at Estoril, is a "moral and spiritual" body whose authority is not military or economic. By entering into relationships with parties and movements which rejected, in whole or in part, the very basis of that moral authority, it was risking the loss of its most precious possession. But by not doing so, it would render itself irrelevant to the majority of humankind for the foreseeable future. Brandt chose to take the risks—rightly, to my mind.

At the same time, Brandt and the International came out for the New International Economic Order, which is why *Business Week* was concerned. As a result of these moves, the International since 1976 has been much, much more active than ever before and has begun to change its composition dramatically. At the Estoril meeting of the Bureau there were thirty-three member parties, eleven of them from the Third World, six more from outside of Europe. Thus for the first time in the International's history there was a majority of non-Europeans. In addition there were invited guests from fifteen Third World countries and movements, including Nicaragua (represented by Eden Pastore, the legendary "Comandante Zero"), the Southwestern African Peoples Organization from Namibia, the African National Congress from South Africa and Frelimo from Mozambique.

This Third World presence represented a response to the International's initiatives in recent years: a mission to Southern Africa led by Olaf Palme; a Latin American mission under Mario Soares; a Party Leader's Conference in Tokyo; socialist efforts in the UN to limit new investment in South Africa; support to the Sandinistas before they took power; solidarity work with the Chileans before and after the coup; effective pressure to help Antonio Guzman, the candidate of one of the International's member parties, take power after an electoral victory in the Dominican Republic. Obviously, Brandt had followed his announced policies with energy and imagination. But one unintended consequence was to make the Middle East a volatile issue in the International. This brings us to the immediate background of the debates at the Estoril Bureau meeting.

UP UNTIL the early seventies, the Israeli Labor Party (ILP), a member party, was the only Middle Eastern organization with which the International had continuing contact. At the Eastbourne Congress in 1969, George Brown had wanted to invite representatives of the Egyptian Socialist Union to participate, with voice but no vote. His proposal, made in Brown's flamboyant, utterly undiplomatic way, was rejected with little debate. And later on in that Congress, Golda Meir spoke—using, it seemed to me, the solidarity-laden word, "comrades," more than any other speaker—to a hushed, and obviously sympathetic audience. Later, after the Yom Kippur War, Meir was to upbraid her comrades for what she considered their cowardly behavior in that crisis. I have heard at least some of the recipients of that wrath privately admit that they deserved it.

But with the turn toward the Third World—and with developments in the Middle East itself—the established attitudes began to shift. A key figure in all of this was, and is, Bruno Kreisky. A superb politician (the only socialist in Europe who commands an absolute majority), a thoughtful intellectual and a grandfather figure in his own country, Kreisky has been the most outspoken protagonist of a new approach toward the Middle East in the International. The fact that he is Jewish has given rise to the inevitable accusations of self-hate. I tend to

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distrust all such long-distance political psychoanalysis and it will not figure in my account of the developments within the International.

In the fall of 1978, the Bureau met in Paris and the Spanish Socialist Partay (The Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) of Felipe Gonzalez proposed to invite the P.L.O. as an observer to the Vancouver Congress of the International in November of that year. Gonzalez comes from a country which has not yet recognized Israel and from a party with more than a few Third World connections (it supports, for instance, the Polisaro guerrillas). Indeed, as a Swedish socialist friend of mine discovered to his shocked amazement when he first represented his nation at the UN, even Franco Spain had a Third World orientation and enjoyed relatively high status among delegates from the global South who had not heard of, or did not care about, the Civil War.

I dwell on this complex Spanish background for a reason. Within his own party, Gonzalez is a moderate and led in the controversial move of taking the official commitment to Marxism out of the PSOE program. Indeed, the London *Economist* has sniped at him by calling him Helmut Gonzalez, i.e., a follower of Helmut Schmidt's cautious, fiscally austere version of social democracy. So there is no neat relationship between domestic and international political attitudes, in the International (or anywhere else). Mario Soares, to cite another case, has tended to agree with Gonzalez on the Middle East, which can hardly be explained by any pro-Communist illusions on the part of the man who defeated Portuguese Stalinism.

Shimon Peres and others vigorously opposed the Spanish initiative in Paris. The result of the debate typified the semi-consensus character of the International: no vote was taken at all and the P.L.O. was thus not invited. But Brandt and Kreisky made it clear during the discussions that they intended to explore matters with the P.L.O. on their own and in particular to try to find out if the P.L.O. had changed its long-standing commitment to the destruction of the Jewish state in Israel (which masquerades under the formulas about a "secular, democratic Palestine"). In July, at the now famous meeting with Arafat in Vienna, they acted on that promise. The debate at Estoril centered on Brandt's report on that meeting.

THERE WERE a number of themes in the discussion and one of the most important had to do with the way in which the Vienna meeting was organized, not with the meeting as such. Arafat had been treated as if he were a head of state and Brandt and Kreisky, it was argued, had conferred a legitimacy on the P.L.O. head without receiving anything tangible—like a clear recognition of Israel's right to exist—in return. This criticism, it seemed to me, had a considerable resonance at Estoril and was accepted by some who on other counts were more sympathetic to Gonzalez's position. One leader usually thought of as numbered among the severe critics of Israel told me that he had privately raised this point with Brandt.

Indeed, it is important to note in this context that almost all of Israel's critics at the meeting continue to be principled defenders of the right of Israel to a secure national existence. Brandt expressed the general sentiment when he spoke of his loyalty to his friends in Israel. Brandt, and Kreisky, are, I am convinced motivated by a sincere conviction that the survival of the Jewish state will be best served by negotiations which will include the P.L.O. (Indeed, Shimon Peres insisted on their sincerity even as he vigorously differed with them.) One can argue with Brandt and Kreisky's view, as the Israelis most emphatically did at Estoril, without caricaturing it as pro-Palestinian and anti-Israeli.

For that matter, perhaps the most significant development in these discussions was the way in which some of the parties which had been most pro-Israeli—and are still deeply committed to Israel's survival—have moved on the tactical question of negotiations with the P.L.O. That question was the very center of the debate. On the one hand, the Israelis recognize Palestinian rights to self-determination. But they reject a "mini-state" (Gaza and the West Bank) solution because they believe it is not economically viable, and will therefore create an inherently unstable, expansionist nation. They would like a resolution of the issue which would involve Jordan (which is, after all, the "natural" Palestinian state). And they are opposed to negotiations with a terrorist movement which has continued to call for Israeli blood *after* the Vienna meeting.

The opposition to this position was not united on anything except one point: that the Israelis should move toward negotiating with the P.L.O. That was the common point of view of the parties most sympathetic and most critical of Israel. And it was urged by some of those who had objected to the way in which Brandt and Kreisky had conducted the meeting with Arafat. Whether one likes it or not, it was argued, the P.L.O. is the *de facto* representative of the Palestinians and there can be no realistic negotiations unless that *fait accompli* is recognized. In part that attitude often includes an assessment of the P.L.O. as what Brandt calls a "roof" organization, i.e., an organization containing many different, and even conflicting, political tendencies, rejectionists fanatically committed to Israel's destruction, and moderates who might be persuaded to accept a negotiated settlement. For those who hold this analysis, Israeli acceptance of negotiating with the P.L.O. would accelerate the internal differentiation within the latter. The Israelis agree that there are different positions within the P.L.O.—but insist that it is the extreme, anti-Israeli wing which calls the tune.

The debate was inconclusive and meant to be. No one offered any resolutions. The Israelis had the opportunity to tell the International of their deep hostility toward the Vienna meeting and of the political damage it had done to them at home in a pre-election period. Brandt, Kreisky and the others had established both their bona fides and their particular strategic conception of the best way to achieve peace in the Middle East and to guarantee Israel's existence and security. These kinds of exchanges are what the International in its present incarnation is designed to facilitate.

As a long-time supporter of Israel, I came back from Portugal with a feeling that bringing the P.L.O. into the negotiat-

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ing process is politically inevitable and that some of the formulas being raised in the Labor Party—that Israel will negotiate with whatever party is willing to recognize Israel—offer hope. At the same time, I do not believe that any public and official legitimacy should be accorded the P.L.O., whether from the International, the United States or anyone else, until it clearly and openly renounces any intention of destroying the Jewish state. Finally, if I do not think that a victory of the Israeli Labor Party in forthcoming elections will solve all problems, that party will be able to respond much more creatively to a difficult situation than the Begin government.

CHALLENGING THE STEREOTYPE

The other right-to-lifers

MARY MEEHAN

ONE OF the best-kept secrets of our time is that the pro-life movement includes in its ranks and among its sympathizers a fair number of liberals and radicals, including some of the most prominent. Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta are against abortion. So are Dick Gregory and Jesse Jackson. So are Daniel Berrigan and Richard Neuhaus. So are many other radicals, pacifists and minority-group members. And a growing number of feminists.

Soon after the 1973 Supreme Court decisions legalizing abortion, then-Senator Harold Hughes of Iowa co-sponsored a constitutional amendment to protect the unborn. Hughes, one of the most liberal Democrats in the Senate, was a leading opponent of the Vietnam war. Before his retirement from the Senate, he cast one of his last votes against a Labor-HEW appropriations bill because it contained Medicaid funding for abortions. Hughes said that financing abortions "as an alternative to doing what we know is right is very simply a denial of all the human spirit stands for. . . ."

Another co-sponsor of the right-to-life amendment was Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon, a liberal Republican and early opponent of the Vietnam war. Hatfield, like Hughes, opposes abortion, capital punishment, and war; he is still in the Senate and still votes against abortion whenever the issue comes up. Other Senate liberals who vote with him include Joseph Biden of Delaware, Thomas Eagleton of Missouri, and William Proxmire of Wisconsin.

On the House side, there are also significant exceptions to the general rule, which is that liberals support the 1973 Supreme Court decisions and also support public funding of abortions through Medicaid. The exceptions include several congressional veterans who were strong opponents of the Vietnam war (Edward Boland of Massachusetts, Lucien Nedzi of Michigan, Romano Mazzoli of Kentucky) and a number of the members first elected in 1974 or 1976 (Mary Rose Oakar of Ohio, Philip Sharp of Indiana, Berkley Bedell of Iowa and Bruce Vento of Minnesota).

A group called Feminists for Life has grown to include about 1,000 women around the country. Pam Cira, President of Feminists for Life, says that her organization has "two really staunch positions": support for the Equal Rights Amendment and support for the Human Life Amendment. She says that the group's membership includes single women, married women, women with children and those without, women who have had abortions, Christians, Jews, and atheists. Though some are radical activists, she believes that the politics of most members could be described as "moderate, leaning liberal." They are united on one principle: "We reject the violence which is the world's way."

Another group with a progressive orientation is the National Youth Pro-Life Coalition. With an estimated 5,000 young people as members, the NYPLC concentrates on educational and lobbying efforts. It runs an intern program in Washington, D.C. every summer. This year, as last year, the interns lobbied for the Hyde Amendment to bar public subsidies for abortion. They also worked on aid to the handicapped, the problems of minorities in the U.S., and the plight of the boat people in Southeast Asia.

A new group called Prolifers for Survival (P.S.) is a network of activists who are opposed to nuclear weapons and nuclear power as well as to abortion. A recent P.S. circular declared: "With contacts in 20 states and 3 countries . , . we're now past that awkward embryo stage and we're now a fat li'l fetus!" It included a cartoon of a fetus in the womb, making a peace sign with one hand and holding a "No Nukes" picket sign in the other.

PRO-LIFERS, whether left or right in their politics, generally begin their case with statements on biology. They note that scientists and doctors say that life begins at conception. They point to the rapid development of the embryo and fetus: regular heart beat between four and five weeks of age; spontaneous movement by six weeks; detectable brain waves by six to seven weeks; all organs and limbs formed by eight weeks; sex

MARY MEEHAN *is a Washington-based writer whose work has appeared in* Inquiry, The Nation, The Washington Post *and other journals.*

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observable by nine weeks; making faces by 10 weeks. How, they ask, can one say that the fetus is not human? And how, in view of its growth and movements, can one say it is not alive?

Many pro-lifers on the left avoid religious arguments on the abortion issue—some because they are not religious, others because they think that public policy should be decided on non-religious grounds. They view as irrelevant the argument that abortion should be allowed because some theologians think that the fetus has a soul only at viability or only at birth. The law, they think cannot deal with souls. But it can and should deal with scientific facts about the beginning of human life.

Because pro-lifers believe there are decisive arguments against abortion on secular grounds, they are not worried by the pro-choice battle cry, "Don't impose your morality on me!" They think that imposing morality, in the sense of defining one person's obligations to another, is what the law is largely about. Senator Hatfield says that "belief in life's fundamental right to be has inevitable corporate consequences." He notes that, in opposing American intervention in Vietnam, "I did not merely believe it would be wrong for me, as an individual, to fight there. I believed that no American should fight there, which compelled me to propose legislation expressing that conviction." Juli Loesch, a pacifist and pro-life feminist, speaks of women in the peace movement:

> It would never occur to us to say, "For private moral reasons I don't personally condone *nuclear arms*, but I really can't impose my feelings on my fellow citizens who don't hold the same religious beliefs—and certainly each nation has the right to choose to incinerate its enemies if it wishes."

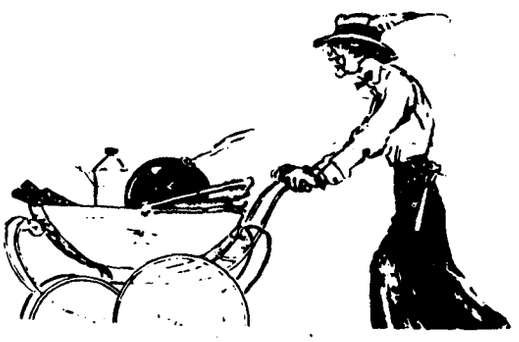
And Jesse Jackson says that the idea that life is private and that one may do with it as one wishes "was the premise of slavery. You could not protest the existence or treatment of slaves on the plantation because that was private and therefore outside of your right to be concerned."

The liberal and radical pro-lifers base one of their strongest arguments against abortion on the principle of equality. Juli Loesch makes the point in an open letter to friends in the American Civil Liberties Union. She writes that everyone "certainly has the right to choose what happens to his or her own body and life" and says that this should include the legal right to smoke tobacco or marijuana, and also the right "to be free of coercion from cigarette smokers, health promoters, tattoo artists, and murder-suicide cultists (including the U.S. military!)" Loesch adds, "More to the point, each woman has the right to be celibate; or to be gay; or to use natural birth control or contraceptive drugs and gadgets if she has chosen not to become a mother. . . ." Then comes a crucial distinction: "But once a woman has conceived, she can no longer choose whether or not to become a mother. Biologically, she already *is* a mother. Her offspring, a separate and genetically unique human individual, is already in existence, and is growing and developing rapidly." According to Loesch, " The woman's rights are then limited, as every right is limited, by the existence of another human being who also has rights." She declares, "As a civil-libertarian and a feminist, I support sexual and reproductive freedom. I also support, as a prior and more basic consideration, the right of everyone to live—and this includes the handicapped, the defective, the eccentric, the elderly, and children, regardless of their dependency, at every stage in their development."

Elizabeth Moore, head of Feminists for Life in the Washington, D.C. area, adds the perspective of the civil rights movement. Moore recalls her life in Florida during the segregation era, "when restrooms, public facilities, private establishments, housing—virtually everything—could be selectively and systematically denied to an entire segment of humanity. I know firsthand the effects of legal non-protection under the Constitution, and, from my point of view, the basic value upon which just law must rest is not 'choice,' but equality." She adds that "I cannot tolerate the destruction of life in a society where I find myself among the expendable." A veteran of the civil rights, peace, and farm workers' causes, Moore believes that the "woman's right to control her own body" theme is a right-wing argument which puts property rights above the right to life.

PRO-LIFERS agonize over the many lives lost through abortion. They also think that easy acceptance of abortion deadens the sensitivity of good people to suffering and death. Jesse Jackson asks, "What happens to the mind of a person, and the moral fabric of a nation, that accepts the aborting of the life of a baby without a pang of conscience?" He wonders about long-term effects: "What kind of a person and what kind of a society will we have twenty years hence if life can be taken so casually?"

Many people who were active in the antiwar effort see connections between Vietnam and abortion. First, there is the physical reality. Abortion is, quite literally, a bloody business. Even when the fetus is only 10 weeks old, suction abortion (the most prevalent method) results in visible parts of a little body, torn up by the power of the machine. The dilation and curettage (D & C) method is often used when the fetus is older. Magda Denes, author of *In Necessity and Sorrow: Life and Death in an Abortion Hospital* (New York, 1976), describes a D & C abortion in more detail than most people want to know. Denes, a supporter of the pro-choice, legal-abortion position, was shocked by the dismemberment of the fetus, particularly when she saw its tiny head resting on the instrument table.



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Doctors who do saline abortions, like pilots who bombed Vietnam from high altitudes, are fortunate in that they seldom see the victims of their work. Salines are done when the fetus is sixteen weeks or older. The doctor injects the womb with salt solution; the woman goes into labor within two days and delivers a still-born infant (often badly burned) or one who dies shortly after birth. In either case, a nurse, rather than the doctor, usually sees the baby.

To pro-lifers on the left, all of this brings back memories of Vietnam, the broken bodies shipped home from there, and the smaller bodies left behind for burial in the villages. They see little, if any, moral difference between killing a fetus in the womb with salt solution and killing a Vietnamese baby with napalm. Both were once alive; both are now dead; and the rhetoric of Gloria Steinem cannot make up for one any more than the rhetoric of Lyndon Johnson could make up for the other.

The military-industrial complex is paralleled by a sort of abortion complex. Some doctors make small fortunes each year from abortions, including Medicaid abortions. Referral agencies make up to $40 per abortion simply by directing a woman to a clinic. (Rather like bounty hunting.) Says Dick Gregory, "It's good business to make abortions legal. Doctors and clinics are reaping millions off of abortions. They're making a hustle out of it."

Finally, there is the language. Many abortion supporters say "termination of pregnancy" or "interruption of pregnancy" instead of "abortion." The fetus is called "products of conception" or "contents of the uterus." Even when the fetus is known to be either female or male, he or she is called "it." Abortion clinics have names like "Women's Reproduction Health Center" and "Preterm" and "Birth Control Institute." Pro-life people who were active in the antiwar movement have been through all of this before. They remember "interdiction" (bombing), "pacification" (military occupation) and "selective ordnance" (napalm). They think that euphemisms are used because the reality is too brutal.

Some peace activists, like Daniel Berrigan, have faced the abortion issue reluctantly. Last year Berrigan admitted to an interviewer for the radical *Seven Days* magazine, "It was painful and difficult but I finally had to face the abortion issue. . . . Integrity compels me to protect life that is endangered. I could not deny in one situation what I affirm in another." He made it clear that he opposed efforts to make abortion illegal, yet also said, "I am still at sea about this. Both sides must talk to each other. I am pleading for more thoughtfulness."

Others, less ambivalent than Berrigan, have parted company with former political allies over the abortion issue. Writer and activist Jay Sykes, who led Eugene McCarthy's 1968 antiwar campaign in Wisconsin and later served as head of the state's ACLU, wrote a "Farewell to Liberalism" several years ago. Sykes cited several areas of disagreement and disillusionment, then added: "It is on the abortion issue that the moral bankruptcy of contemporary liberalism is most clearly exposed." He said that liberals' arguments in support of abortion "could, without much refinement, be used to justify the legalization of infanticide." He had concluded that liberalism "is no longer compatible with the rule of reason or the cause of justice."

Some who still consider themselves liberals are troubled by evidence that many white people support Medicaid funding for abortion because they want to keep down welfare costs—and the black population. Many black leaders are well aware of this. Dick Gregory, for example, views abortion as a form of genocide; he has called it "a death sentence upon us." Certainly he is not imagining racism on this issue. Anyone who discusses abortion with many people runs across open bigotry sooner or later. Last year I helped petition in Maryland to put a liberal, pro-life candidate on the ballot for the state legislature. Going door-to-door in suburban Rockville, I came across a group of five to ten white people visiting in one apartment. (I am white, too.) The head of the household invited me in and let me approach each person with the petition. Everyone was polite. One or two signed the petition; others declined; and I went on my way. But as I went down the stairs, an argument exploded behind me. One of the women declared loudly that she didn't think her tax money should be used to help raise the children of "niggers and spics." Apparently she didn't mind having her tax money used to abort them.

Quite a different view was presented by another middle-class white woman, Ellen McCormack, when she ran for president on a pro-life platform in 1976. "Abortion," said McCormack, "is put forth as a solution for the poor, but I think the poor want better housing, more jobs and food on their tables. I don't think aborting their babies makes them any happier. I think it probably contributes to their misery."

ALTHOUGH the women's movement generally has supported legalized abortion and has called this a matter of women's rights, some feminists disagree strongly. Thus Daphne de Jong, a pro-life feminist of New Zealand, writes: "Of all the things which are done to women to fit them into a society dominated by men, abortion is the most violent invasion of their physical and psychic integrity. It is a deeper and more destructive assault than rape. . . ." She views abortion as "merely another way in which women are manipulated and degraded for male convenience and male profit. This becomes blatantly obvious in the private abortion industries of both Britain and America, and the support given to the pro-abortion lobby by such exploitative corporations as the *Playboy* empire." She refers to the women's movement as "processing women through abortion mills to manufacture instant imitation-men who will fit into a society made by and for wombless people. Accepting the 'necessity' of abortion is accepting that pregnant women and mothers are unable to function as persons in this society."

Juli Loesch, like de Jong, sees abortion as a great convenience for men. She notes that, before abortion-on-demand, the father of a child born out of wedlock was expected to be accountable and to provide support. But now, she says:

> the responsible thing is to put up the cash for an abortion ("No hard feelings, OK?"); and if the man actually goes to the clinic with the woman—if he holds her hand—

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why, he's a prince. . . . And if the woman, for some reason, ends up having the baby after all, the man may feel perfectly justified in saying, "Hell, I did my duty. I offered to abort it. Don't expect me to help support it."

Jo McGowan, another feminist/pacifist, says that as long as "women continue to accept the myth that pregnancy, birth or abortion, and the child-rearing responsibilities are their special province, the patriarchy has us exactly where it wants us." She believes that "I can no more control my body by destroying my child than I can insure my safety by building Trident submarines." McGowan has been arrested and jailed for demonstrating at a Trident plant, at the Seabrook nuclear power plant, and in an abortion clinic. To the police who arrested her at the clinic sit-in, she said, "It has gotten to the point where people have to put their bodies on the line and really suffer over this, because things are not going to change otherwise."

Jeanne Miller, a leader of the clinic counseling and sit-in movement, estimates that the typical sit-inner is between 25 and 31 years of age. Many are married women with children. Some were involved in civil disobedience during the civil rights or Vietnam protests; and many are pacifists. Miller thinks that about three hundred people around the country are directly involved in sit-ins—that is, entering clinics and exposing themselves to arrest. Two or three times that number are in supportive roles; they leaflet or picket outside the clinics or staff pregnancy aid centers which help women who decide against abortion. Some spend much time in standing outside abortion clinics, quietly trying to persuade women who are about to have abortions to change their minds.

RIGHT-TO-LIFERS on the left are not optimistic about ending abortion in the near future. Most see the Human Life Amendment as the best hope, though not all favor criminalization of abortion. There is a feeling that penalties should be assessed against the doctors who perform abortions, rather than the women who undergo them. (One feminist suggests heavy fines for doctors who perform abortions; she reasons that most of them are doing it for money and that wiping out their profits would remove their incentive.) Pro-lifers realize that a long educational and political effort is needed to ensure passage of a constitutional amendment. They do not, however, share the belief of pro-choicers that a Human Life Amendment would go the way of the Prohibition Amendment—largely unenforced and eventually repealed. They think that the proper analogy is the Thirteenth Amendment, which formally abolished slavery. Once the legal personhood of the unborn is re-established, they believe, it will be sustained.

Meanwhile, they go their way—leafleting, picketing, sitting in, writing, debating, counseling, pleading. Occasionally they are embarrassed by statements of their right-wing friends in the pro-life movement. Often, however, they are pleased by signs that the "reverence for life" philosophy encourages conservatives to rethink issues other than abortion. Some conservatives are questioning their previous support of capital punishment. Others, aware of the strong economic pressures on pregnant women who are poor, now view welfare issues from a fresh perspective. And if a conservative like Rep. Robert Dorman of California can say that the targeting of civilian populations by nuclear war strategists is immoral (as he did at the last National Right to Life convention), pro-lifers on the left hope that liberals like Edward Kennedy and Jerry Brown and Birch Bayh can take another look at abortion.

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Screen

AN 'INNOCENT' DRACULA

MYTH RATHER THAN MELODRAMA

THERE'S a certain irony in the fact that when F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* was released in 1922, the publishers of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* sued for copyright infringement. The irony is that Murnau's film is an attempt to get away from Stoker's novel, not imitate it. The book turns the Dracula legend into the sort of Victorian novel that is half novel of manners, half Gothic romance. Published in 1898, it turns Dracula into an upper-class Jack the Ripper. Once Dracula has transported himself from the Carpathians to England, which happens within the first fifth of the novel, he pretty much disappears from the story. He is always feared to be lurking about somewhere outside, but is seldom seen. By writing the novel as if it were a composite of the journals of various characters in it, Stoker purposely made it necessary for Dracula to be absaent, to be known only by inference, much of the time.

The intention of Murnau's film is to make the Count once again into the immutable presence that he had been in ancient legend. In the novel, when Dracula makes an appearance in polite society—playing host to the story's hero, Jonathan Harker, for instance—he seems a sinister character but nothing worse. In Murnau's film we know the minute we lay eyes on him that he is not just a creepy eccentric, even by English

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standards. Actor Max Schreck was made up for the role with a shaved head, pointed ears, his skin pigmented white and his fingernails extended into six-inch talons. The first time we see him Dracula emerges from the darkness as if he were materializing before our eyes, and he retains his alien quality, his absolute otherworldliness, throughout the film.

Nevertheless, the representatives of Stoker's rights prevailed and had the film removed from distribution. When it was allowed back in circulation again, only mutilated versions of it had survived. Since the silent era was over by then, it remained something of a lost film, a cult favorite which movie history had, unfortunately, passed by. All the numerous versions of Dracula made since the sound era began have followed from Stoker's novel and the popular John Balderston-Hamilton Deane play based on it. When Bela Lugosi introduces himself in the Hollywood version of 1935 with the line, "I am Drahkoolah," he isn't just whistling in the dark. He *is* Dracula, the only Dracula we have known since. Traces of the mannered egregiousness which Lugosi lent to the role are still apparent in Frank Langella's performance today. Like locusts, visitations from Dracula seem to come in twenty-year cycles. The last notable revival of the role, before Langella's, was Christopher Lee's in a series of British Dracula films which began in the 1950s and also followed Lugosi's lead.

The modern tradition of the horror film has acknowledged Murnau's classic only by mocking it. Having materialized out of darkness originally, Dracula fades away in a beam of sunlight at the end of Murnau's version, leaving only a wisp of smoke on the carpet. I think the low point in the use subsequent horror films have made of Murnau comes in Roger Corman's *The Raven* (1963) when Peter Lorre wins a sorcerer's contest with Boris Karloff by decimating him in a lightning bolt. The bolt comes through the window like the beam that kills Dracula, and reduces Karloff to a smoldering puddle on the floor. Plunging a finger he has dipped in the puddle into his mouth, Lorre exclaims, "Raspberry jam!"

Where Stoker's novel turns Dracula into Jack the Ripper, movie adaptations have gone further, turning him into Jekyll and Hyde. They are conventionally understood as a dramatization of Jack the Ripper anyhow, so deepening the split which the novel created in Dracula's personality was the next logical step. Schizophrenia makes available a side of Dracula that plays well in drawing-room scenes, and that side has taken over the whole character little by little, until now Dracula has become a part suited to Frank Langella. Done on the stage amidst the spare, spindly line and dry humor of Edward Gorey's sets, the lushness of Langella's performance may have had its appeal. But in widescreen Technicolor it is too rich a confection.

In the movie version, Langella plays his role with a suave eroticism. His Dracula is someone about whom other characters are apprehensive not because he is frightening, but because he is too attractive. When he makes an entrance in his opera cape, the impression is of a Bela Lugosi softened by the influence of Fred Astaire. Even when he is descending a castle wall upside down, he remains poised, impeccable, debonair.

The *other* side of Dracula's personality—the original side, which is the only one the imagination can really feed upon—has become so atrophied that it is now left to the special effects people. Veteran effects man Albert Whitlock illustrates the split personality of the Hollywood Dracula at every opportunity. Langella leaps from the top of a stair, and a bat lands at the bottom. He bolts through a window; and as the man enters one side of the casement, a wolf emerges from the other.

It is to rescue Dracula from the defilements of high camp that Werner Herzog has now made his own *Nosferatu*. Herzog wants to restore Murnau's film to its rightful place in movie history, so he has remade the Murnau version scene by scene. He has even costumed his star, Klaus Kinski, in the same talons, pointy ears, shaved head, and white skin that Max Schreck has in the original. This is not to say that Herzog has no ideas of his own. Where his film departs from Murnau's, it is in the direction of naturalizing, even humanizing, the Dracula character. For example, a glimpse of rats in one of Murnau's scenes becomes in Herzog's film an epidemic of the plague. As the film's heroine, Isabelle Adjani is at times literally wading through the rats which Herzog let loose in Delft, where most of the film was shot.

I think Herzog got carried away here with an inspiration provided by the monkeys let loose on the raft at the end of his first film with Kinski, *Aguirre, the Wrath of God*. Although Herzog assured them that the several thousand rats he released were sterile, the city fathers of Delft were not pleased. They

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curtailed his privileges so that for scenes in a public square which should have taken four days to shoot, he was allowed only four hours, from four to eight A.M. one Sunday. Despite the fact that half this ridiculous shooting schedule was nearly useless, because it would still be dark, Herzog got all the scenes done. As I mentioned before, he's somewhat obsessive about filmmaking. He is in fact a kind of demon who will do whatever is necessary to get a film made. And from his point of view the rats and the almost physical feeling of plague they impart to the film are necessary. At the same time that he is trying to revive the Dracula legend, Herzog is trying to make us sense its lost power. We should be able to understand, he is suggesting, how compelling a figure Dracula was in a world where death could take such an inexplicable and irresistible form as the plague. Dracula answered a human need which we may have yet, but no longer recognize.

Herzog has naturalized Murnau's Dracula in other ways, too. The over-use of special effects and trick photography in Dracula films came after Murnau, who employed them only to a limited extent. Herzog makes almost no use of them. As a consequence his Dracula seems, though always a creature separate and distinct from human beings, still subject to the world in which they live. He is not the mere ghost that Murnau's film sometimes makes him. In the climactic scene when Lucy Harker (Adjani) seduces him, he rakes up her dress and gropes her crotch with a human lust Murnau's Dracula is not permitted. In a moment that is a brilliant stroke on Herzog's part, we hear Dracula slurping at Lucy's throat, as if satisifying his eternal thirst for blood provided only the most casual physical pleasure, like sucking up the dregs of a chocolate malt through a straw. And when the dawn light kills Dracula, he does not evaporate into it as in the Murnau film. His body remains on the bedroom floor, an awkward remnant of his curse which the mortal characters will, to their chagrin and distaste, have to clean up.

At the end of Murnau's film, Dracula has been vanquished forever. At the end of Herzog's, Jonathan Harker (Bruno Ganz) has turned pale and grown long teeth and nails as Dracula dies. In the final shot Jonathan gallops across tidal flats where he and Lucy used to walk. He has taken up Dracula's eternal wanderings. Again there is a suggestion that Dracula is somehow human, his immortality the result of a process of death and renewal. At moments like these Herzog succeeds in making Dracula a richly paradoxical creature. On the one hand, Herzog's film restores the immutable otherness of Dracula as Murnau conceived him. He is no longer the chameleon character of the Hollywood tradition, the oily, familiar villain in a Victorian melodrama. On the other hand, he is not quite the ethereal being that Murnau made him either. He is in his strangeness a more pathetic figure. He is world-weary. We understand his premonition that, because he will live on in a modern world with an insufficient sense of evil, he will outlive his own glory.

The beauty of Herzog's film is that it makes no apology for Dracula. It isn't embarrassed by him. It doesn't cringe when the figure he cuts becomes a ridiculous and laughable one. Unlike other recent filmmakers, Herzog feels no need to make a spoof out of the Dracula legend, to show his modern superiority to it. His treatment of it is "innocent," as he himself has said. The result is that he has made the best Dracula film since Murnau, and maybe the best ever. *(The second of three parts)*

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

WHAT DOES BIOGRAPHY DO?

The appetite for lives

MARK TAYLOR

"THE CONVERSATION of authors is not so good as might be imagined," Hazlitt remarked, "but, such as it is (and with rare exceptions) it is better than any other." Hazlitt assumed authors to be innately more interesting than anyone else, and in calling their conversation "better," he meant primarily not that it was more profound, or sprightly, or witty, or urbane, but that it was more revelatory, that it gave us the authentic author as his works would not because of his apparatus of self-censorship. "In the confidence and unreserve of private intercourse," Hazlitt continued, "they are more at liberty to say what they think. . . . This would hardly agree with the prudery, and somewhat ostentatious claims of authorship." It's true that we have always wanted to get inside our authors, and if one agrees with Hazlitt, then any biography that gives us an author's conversations, or, indeed, the events of his life, has its obvious uses. On the other hand, I suspect that today many people would not agree with Hazlitt's analysis but would assert, to the contrary, that the "real" author is more easily concealed in the life than in the works.

Whatever one holds, the volumes in this interesting series from Scribners (which have been appearing for some years now and include titles on Austen, Pepys, Wilde, and numerous others) are unlikely to offer much support since they illuminate their subjects' lives by neither their works nor their conversations. But it is unfair to chide a book for not doing what it does not pretend or attempt to do. None of these biographical essays rests on original research, I believe, and most of the authors are not regarded as special authorities on their subjects; their books

MARK TAYLOR *is Chairman of the English Department at Manhattan College. His new book,* Shakespeare's Darker Purpose, *will be published this year.*

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admittedly offer unexceptionable accounts of the facts of lives only, not the significances, and in such a way as to give continuity to the 100 or more illustrations—usually fascinating and often rare—that accompany each volume. The books are helpful introductions to their subjects' lives and, as the titles say, "worlds." My comparative estimates of the worth of these volumes extend along a very short arc of judgment. If I claim to be somewhat disappointed by Graves on Lawrence and Burgess on Hemingway, I mean to emphasize that, after all, the subject of one is T.E. Lawrence, and the author of the other is Anthony Burgess. If I claim to be especially pleased by Bradley on Morris and Priestley on Dickens, I call attention, in the first instance, to my earlier ignorance of the variety of Morris's achievement, and in the second, to my delight that what is familiar about Dickens can be so freshly and compassionately stated. (Priestley's essay, incidentally, was first published in 1961 and is, so far as I can tell, the only one of the six listed here that was written neither for the "world" series nor within the past two or three years.)

Collectively, however, despite their limited scope, these volumes call attention to the enormous appetite that exists these days for biography. Among literary figures of whom *major* lives have recently appeared,Dickens, Conrad, Forster, Hesse, Bernard Berenson, Delmore Schwartz, and (that *ne plus ultra* of biographer's subjects) Dr. Johnson come immediately to mind; among non-literary figures, Douglas MacArthur, Liv Ullmann, and Martha Mitchell. There are hundreds more. I've no idea whether more biographies are now published than novels, but I do know people whose preference in reading has switched from the novel to the biography, and I think it is worth asking why this is so. It is also worth asking what biography as a distinct literary form is and does, and whether it has, or should have, evolved much over the last couple of centuries.

"How inexpressibly comfortable to know our fellow-creature," wrote Carlyle, "to see into him, understand his goings-forth, decipher the whole heart of his mystery: nay, not only to see into him, but even to see out of him, to view the world altogether as he views it," until finally we "thoroughly discern both what manner of man he is, and what manner of thing he has got to work on and live on!" This rapture, occasioned particularly by contemplation of Boswell's *Life of Johnson,* the "one good Biography in the English language," is perhaps shared from time to time by most regular consumers of biography; it is a state that we may call imagined gratification of the Guildenstern instinct since Carlyle echoes Hamlet's accusation to that worthy: "You would pluck out the heart of my mystery." The Guildenstern instinct clearly arises from the belief that all men have their hidden aspects, which are, nevertheless, under certain circumstances—and perhaps only to certain inquirers—somehow knowable. "There is, perhaps, in every thing of any consequence," wrote Boswell, "a secret history which it would be amusing to know, could we have it authentically communicated." Carlyle was a no-nonsense fellow (so he thought) for whom the method of plucking out hearts was itself no mystery: it consisted largely of the amassing of facts. "Let any one bethink him how impressive the smallest historical *fact* may become, as contrasted with the grandest *fictitious event* . . ." Carlyle could not have known how hard Boswell worked to make Johnson so exceptionally "Johnsonian."

DICKENS AND HIS WORLD
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Marc Pachter, ed.
New Republic Books, $9.95, 151 pp.

For some biographers, mere compilation of data remains the biographical method. I will kindly not name the most grotesque examples in my mind of the swollen lives whose authors have been unable to ignore any letter, journal jotting, or anecdote—however trivial, repetitious, immaterial to anything—and equally unable to subordinate these documents to any sensible sort of plan. There is, perhaps, a posture of essential humility beneath this refusal to select and arrange: who am I, the biographer asks, to interpret for you? More often, however, both to readers and writers of biography, the facts of the subject's life, whether or not they have been selected with much care and analyzed with much sensitivity, imply by their chronological order, more than their simple existence, some kind of inherently meaningful design. Frequently biographies begin with descriptions of the place of the subject's birth and of the two or three generations of his family preceding him; sometimes place and persons merge as generations are traced back farther, to the family's settling in the area. Then the subject is born and there follow, in Ruskin's phrase, the "three great divisions—essentially those of all men's lives. . .—the days of youth, of labour, and of death"; that will be all except, usually, that each moment is *allowed* to justify each previous moment and to necessitate each subsequent one.

TRADITIONAL biography is a species of narrative in which, as in any species of narrative, a succession of events is recounted, and in which, moreover, a causal relationship is assumed to exist among these events. Mere, perhaps fortuitous successiveness is seen to be, is unquestioningly accepted as, sequence. And, ironically, the more disciplined and selective a biographer is—the more intelligent, persuasive, and methodologically advanced, in other words, that he is over the tiresome compiler—the more he may be insisting upon the objective character of what we perceive only because he taught us to. The facts of a man's life, on the one hand, and the power of the biog-

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rapher's imagination, on the other, are related approximately as Nature to Art, respectively, in this formulation of Oscar Wilde's at the beginning of "The Decay of Lying"; "What Art really reveals to us is Nature's lack of design, her curious crudities, her extraordinary monotony, her absolutely unfinished condition. . . . As for the definite variety of Nature, that is a pure myth. It is not to be found in Nature herself. It resides in the imagination, or fancy, or cultivated blindness of the man who looks at her." Taking as vision the biographer's cultivated blindness, we continue in regarding biography as the "true" portrait of a human being.

The point is not, of course, that events are never causally related but that they are not always so, and thus that total narrative coherence, which may be no more a part of the fundamental structure of events than it is a persistent and congenial faculty of the human mind, may be an illusion. When things are sequentially intelligible we understand them, but sometimes understanding is arrived at through the imposition of sequential intelligibility. Historians probably understand the dangers of a too-easily-arrived-at sense of causality better than most biographers; perhaps it is an advantage, in this respect, that history is an academic discipline, whose practitioners are answerable to each other, while biography is not. Certainly, the unsophisticated procedures of the medieval chroniclers have been discredited for centuries whereas something like these same procedures remain evident in the least stimulating of contemporary biographies.

It may be, however, that the problems of biography are illuminated less by historical writing than by fiction. Carlyle, who as we have seen had considerable disdain for even "the grandest fictitious event," asked his reader to "consider the whole class of Fictitious Narratives; from the highest category of epic or dramatic Poetry, in Shakespeare or Homer, down to the lowest of froth Prose in the Fashionable Novel. What are all these but so many mimic biographies? Attempts, here by an inspired Speaker, there by an uninspired Babbler, to deliver himself . . . of the grand secret wherewith all hearts labour oppressed: the significance of Man's Life. . . ." The idea that fiction is, or once was, mimic biography isn't so extravagant as it may seem.

The word "biography" entered the language in 1683—most fittingly in Dryden's *Life of Plutarch,* himself the man often, and of course subsequently (and not altogether accurately) called the father of biography. "In all parts of Biography," Dryden wrote, "Plutarch equally excell'd." By the time Dryden was writing, biography already had roots deep in the English literary tradition: Roper's *Life of Sir Thomas More,* usually designated the first English biography, evidently circulated in manuscript in the late 1550s (though it was not printed until 1626); Cavendish finished his *Life of Cardinal Wolsey* about the same time; and much more recently, Walton's collected *Lives* had appeared in 1670. Nevertheless, literary modes, like other categories, tend to be defined by the finest achievements they contain, and therefore Boswell's *Life of Johnson* and to a lesser though still considerable degree Johnson's own *Lives of the Poets* insist that English biography reached maturity in the eighteenth century. Boswell diffidently pretends that his great work may be unable to satisfy the very high public expectations of it, but he does not find it necessary to justify the very activity of biography-making. This confidence shows that biography had arrived and may be contrasted with the defensiveness that Milton's nephew Edward Phillips had shown a century earlier in his life of his celebrated uncle (1694): "Of all the several parts of history, that which sets forth the lives, and commemorates the most remarkable actions, sayings, or writings of famous and illustrious persons . . . as it is not the least useful in itself, so it is in highest vogue and esteem among the studious and reading part of mankind." A century later, this would be generally agreed, and no one would have to say it.

Perhaps it is only coincidence, but also in the eighteenth century, when biography was reaching maturity, prose fiction was maturing into the novel. It is the case, I believe, that although equally ancient in anticipation (by Plutarch and Suetonius, say, and by the Greek romancers Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius—all from the first three centuries A.D., though proto-biographies and proto-novels can be argued from much earlier periods), in the eighteenth century both the biography and novel determine and solidify the conventions that will govern them long after. The reader's expectations, for example, on beginning a work in either mode became quite specific, and had consequently to be acknowledged in a way they had not been before. That the reader of biographies expected to find "the History of particular Mens Lives," in Dryden's phrase, is now redundant and is worth saying only because for a long time the reader of novels had identical expectations. In the latter instance, of course, the particular men were not "real," but that obvious difference should not obscure the fact that fictional realism derived in part from the novel's imitating, and then perfecting, the conventions of biography.

Two such conventions are narrative coherence and titles. Like biographies, traditional novels demand the reader's willingness to accept the interrelatedness of events in someone's life whether that life is real or imagined. I have discussed above the problem with this assumption in biography, and I shall return to it, but it is worth noting that in theory the novel offers a solution to the whole problem since, if we are willing to accept the novelist's invention of events and persons, we should be willing to accept his invention of the relationships among them. On the other hand, if the novelist asks us to accept these invented relationships—for example, by not questioning his right to authorial omniscience—the price he pays is the admission that his story is fiction not truth. The novelist tries to have it both ways when he claims subjectivity of interpretation: using phrases such as "It was told to me" and "Long ago I first heard the story of . . ."; or telling the story in the first person voice of one of its participants and pretending to limit his knowledge and insights accordingly.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries one would be hard put to distinguish great numbers of

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novels from biographies on the basis of their titles. Of early English novels the one least linear in structure and most suspicious of narrative coherence is probably *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, a title that shows Sterne's residual commitment to biographical convention. The first installments of his book preceded by three decades *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LI. D.*, which thus comes, however slightly, to resemble a novel. It is a good form for titles, and with minor variation or none it is repeated *ad infinitum: The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild, the Great; The Adventures of Ferdinand, Count Fathom; The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit; The History of Henry Esmond, Esq.; Felix Holt the Radical.*

The corollary of our recognizing the novel's shameless imitation of biography is the recognition that the novel exploited and capitalized on the reason for biography's popularity: the reader's Guildenstern instinct. There was comfort to be derived from knowing our fellow-creature, it seems, whether or not the fellow-creature even existed. For a while, perhaps, the comfort was greater if he did not exist, as the popularity of novels far exceeded that of biographies.

Then, mainly in the present century, something happened: the dubious premises behind narrative coherence were discovered—and by the novelists, not the biographers; by and large the biographers remain unaware of the discovery. Perhaps this ignorance is necessary for self-preservation; certainly (if temporarily) it allowed biography to win back much of the ground taken over by the novel. My friend Ira Grushow, who has many good and important things to say about biography, suggested to me that, since the makers of modern fiction are in some sense right about the nature of human experience, traditional biography may be doomed (at least if it ever thinks about itself). Joyce and Woolf found the significance of lives not in sequence of events but in "epiphanies" or "random moments"; the point of *Ulysses* for the modern sensibility is not that an ordinary day can represent microcosmically a man's whole life (such is a premise of medieval allegory) but that even on that

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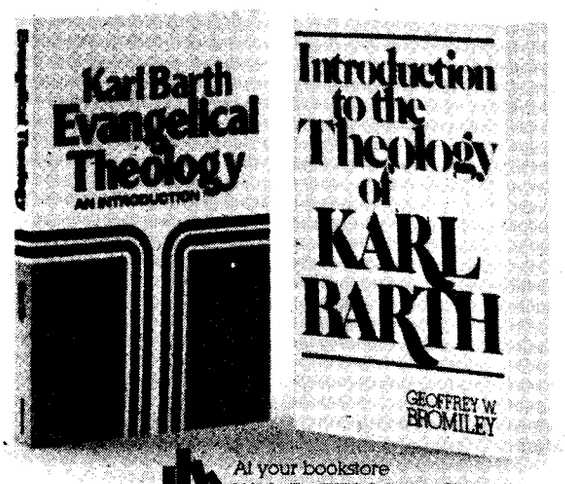

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day chronology is but one—and one of the least interesting, at that—of the ways that Bloom's experiences are organized, just as turning from one page to the next is but one—and finally one of the least effective—of the ways we read that book. I don't want to enter into the largely pointless and entirely tedious debate on whether or not contemporary fiction is wasting its and our time, but it is obvious, surely, that no novelist today can proceed unmindful of the lessons of *Ulysses* and hope to convince us that he is getting at the truth.

The contributors to *Telling Lives* (Justin Kaplan, Doris Kearns, and Barbara Tuchman among them) have all written essays that are interesting pendants to their biographical work, but only Leon Edel confronts theoretical objections to biography of the sort I have been sketching. Consequently, his essay, though it, too, is a vindication of his own work, might have very large implications—I hope it will have them—for the future of biography. Professor Edel describes a recent exhibition of portraits done by modern painters at the National Portrait Gallery in London. He writes that all of the artists, "cubists, vorticists, impressionists, and the other innovators of our time sought to put on canvas living subjects created out of new visions of reality." They had all, he continues, "done exactly what I am saying the biographer must now do: they sought to go behind the facade, to penetrate the mask." Here, for once, is a biographer on whom the lessons of modernism have not been lost, who realizes that modern art calls into question the truth of all traditional forms of organization (including narrative), not only imaginative ones. For Professor Edel, however, the recognition is a challenge and an opportunity, not a limitation. "A secret myth," he writes, "as well as a manifest myth . . . is hidden within every creative life"—it is this secret myth, ignored by traditional portraitists like Rembrandt, that modern painters expose—"and, in the gestures of a politician, the strategies of a general, the canvases and statues of art, and the life-styles of charismatic characters, we may discover more than biography has ever discovered in the past." Once the novel imitated biography; now, biography, if it is to regain our trust and perhaps if it is to survive, must imitate the novel—that is, take the direction the novel took when it liberated itself from the conventions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Books: SYNTHETIC MYTH

SHIKASTA

Doris Lessing

Knopf, $10.95, 365 pp.

Martin Green

THIS IS, we are told, the first of three science fiction narratives which Doris Lessing has written, under the general title of *Canopus in Argos: Archives*. They were originally intended to be all one volume. "But as I wrote I was invaded with ideas for other books, other stories, and the exhilaration that comes from being set free into a larger scope, with more capacious possibilities and themes. It was clear I had made—or found—a new world for myself . . ." (p. viii)

Strictly speaking, this is not science fiction. It manifests no scientific or technological imagination; star ships come and go and we find out nothing about them except that they shine. This is historical and mythological fantasy—as is, of course, much science fiction in the loose sense. The subject of the fantasy is the history of the human race, including its end, set in the more faintly pictured history of other races, its precursors and tutors.

In effect Doris Lessing retells the story of the Bible, incorporating along the way elements from other Middle East religious traditions. The specifically modern part, and the nearest in feel to science fiction, is the description of the end of our civilization—which is indeed central. And I think it is more than mere coincidence that it is from British writers these days that we get these fantasies about history and how different it might have been—from Kingsley Amis and William Golding—and something equivalent from British critics. The main fact in modern English consciousness, though it surfaces obliquely and intermittently, is the end of the empire, and it is easy to take the imaginative step which translates that into 'the end of the world.'

Such a step is in a way implied in this book's dedication. "For my father, who used to sit, hour after hour, night after night, outside our house in Africa, watching the stars. 'Well,' he would say, 'if we blow ourselves up, there's plenty more where we came from.' " For Doris Lessing's admirers, that figure and that kind of remark will be very familiar, from Chapter I of *Martha Quest* on. Her father is always presented as an incarnation of the England left behind after the break-up of Empire—the man becalmed and marooned in a world to which none of his gifts or ideas are adjusted, and against whom his daughter rebels in the name of life. He sits dreaming, giving up on life, letting down the women in his family. But by now, by 1979, that daughter too is sitting watching the stars, because it isn't only the Empire that has ended, but the world.

And the literary pleasures she offers in this volume are parallel with her father's remark. I don't mean to suggest that it is intellectually slack or imaginatively dull, for in fact I found it moving, but its dominant mood is 'wisdom,' that mode of consciousness which is born in, though it rises above, non-participatory resignation. The book is not, I mean, intellectually brilliant in the mode of Thomas Pynchon; nor do all the sentences ring artistically true, in the mode of Philip Roth. The form is elaborate,

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without its elaboration giving any special pleasure (which was of course true of her finest novel, *The Golden Notebook*). After a twenty-page wind-in, which mainly bewilders, the 'story' may be said not really to begin until p. 210. Even the most potent fictional ideas, like a Mock-Trial of the white races, in which they are indicted by the dark-skinned, are merely introduced, and not fully developed.

Nevertheless, the book does not seem inadequate to its soaring theme. The plot functions well enough to allow the author to develop her brooding images of the human predicament. "Around those beds where lovers lie obsessed, what accomplished beings hover, savouring each caress, each long drunken look, each kiss—of all the intoxicants, this is the most powerful. . . . Creatures infinitely damaged, reduced, and dwindled from their origins, degenerate, almost lost—animals far removed from what was first envisaged for them by their designers. . . ." This is some of Doris Lessing's finest writing.

The subject is of course Jungian in its stress on synthetic myth and race memory. We are asked to recognize, as the narrative proceeds, transformed fragments of long familiar stories, poems, religious traditions. In this way, her science fiction can be compared with C.S. Lewis's—someone we would never have compared *Martha Quest* to. But it is a point worth dwelling on, because Lessing seems to be becoming a religious novelist. One of the most successful formal devices of the novel is the way she makes cities (our cities) all seem like the cities of the plain. And in this book, for the first time, she suggests that there is an active principle of evil. The planet Shammat sends its envoys to Shikasta (Earth) and they are responsible for the plague of greed which ruins human nature. The character who seems most to represent the author explains "There is somebody or something that needs all this savagery and blood. The Devil, I expect. I feel as if I have suddenly found a key in my hand."

Another source of strength is the way this book echoes and takes up the themes of Lessing's earlier work. There are characters and situations from *The 4-Gated City* and *Briefing for a Descent into Hell:* There are echoes of *The Summer Before the Dark* in the interest in international experts, and in generational conflicts among the elite; and so on. Thus the mass of her previous work is organized to support this new and different venture.

But above all, what gives weight to this book is the 'religious' truth it tells—what it shares with the film, *The China Syndrome*. As that comparison will show, I am now using 'religious' in a different sense. Works of this kind are so transparent to the truth they tell (a truth about a public crisis we are all involved in) and their art is so dedicated to that truth, that their effect can only be compared with that of "Everyman" during the Middle Ages. They are the kind of thing Tolstoy was asking for in *What Is Art?*, because they arouse the consciousness proper to us here today, the feelings that unite *us*.

She stands as she has done for millennia, cutting bread, setting out sliced vegetables on a plate, with a bottle of wine, and thinks that nothing in this meal is safe, that the poisons of their civilization are in every mouthful, and that they are about to fill their mouths with deaths of all kinds. In an instinctive gesture of safety, renewal, she hands a piece of bread to her child, but the gesture has lost its faith as she makes it, because of what she may be handing the child.

—Shikasta

Catholic, monk & priest

THOMAS MERTON: MONK AND POET

George Woodcock

Farrar, Straus, Giroux, $7.95, $3.95 paper, 200 pp.

Bernard Bergonzi

GEORGE WOODCOCK says of himself, "I am not a Catholic; I am not even a practicing Christian, and though I acknowledge the unknowable God, I suspect that my personal kind of deism might come nearer to what Merton thought of as atheism." He recognizes, though, that there is common ground between Merton and himself, "some shared stretch of the desert," as he calls it, and his book is remarkable for the sympathy and insight with which he discusses the developing ideas of the Cistercian writer. And though he is not a Catholic he writes in a well-informed and sensitive way about the profound changes in the Catholic Church in the '50s and '60s. Mr. Woodcock disposes of Merton's life in a few pages at the beginning of the book. Merton was the son of a fairly successful and prosperous New Zealand artist and an American mother; his early education in England and France was cosmopolitan and rather random, though it included a year at

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Cambridge. In 1934 he returned to America at the age of nineteen and in the manner of the times became for a brief period a card-carrying Communist. He entered Columbia to read social sciences, but soon switched to literature, under the persuasion of Mark Van Doren. At Columbia Merton took his B.A. and went on to write an M.A. thesis on Blake, who was a crucial early influence on his spiritual development. In 1938 he became a Catholic and in 1941 he entered the Trappist monastery of Gethsemani in Kentucky. He remained there for the rest of his life, until he emerged in 1968 to undertake a tour of spiritual investigation in Asia, and died in an accident in Bangkok.

Reasonably, Mr. Woodcock abandons biography when Merton becomes a monk; there cannot be a great deal to say about the day-to-day life of a man who spends twenty-seven years in a monastery, although some events were important, as when Merton gave up living in the community to embark on an eremitical life in a cottage in the grounds, though still taking his midday meal with the other monks. Throughout his monastic life Merton wrote copiously, poetry and devotional or contemplative prose, and most of Mr. Woodcock's book is devoted to Merton's ideas and his literary work. Merton became famous with *The Seven Storey Mountain*, which was a religious bestseller in 1948. By the end of his life, he had come to acknowledge that its intense but narrow spirituality had dated; Mr. Woodcock quotes an apt description of the book as "that swan-song of the nineteenth-century monastic revival." By the '60s Merton had moved a long way from exclusive pre-conciliar orthodoxy; his cast of mind was naturally wide-ranging in its interests and sympathies, and he was expressing ecumenist sentiments slightly before Vatican II made them customary. He turned too with increasing curiosity and sympathy to Eastern religious experience, although his fundamental commitment as Catholic, monk and priest remained completely firm.

Mr. Woodcock is himself knowledgeable about Zen and the Tao and the varieties of Buddhism that Merton became interested in, and he can assess Merton's writings on them in an informed way. Occasionally he convicts Merton of a certain naiveté and over-eagerness to welcome signs of an alien spirituality, like the Tibetan refugees he observed in India, spinning prayer wheels and muttering mantras; Woodcock comments, "He does not seem to have understood how much of this was the kind of routine pietism he would have dismissed among Christians . . ." Again, he suggests that Merton tried too hard to see resemblances between Christian belief and Zen or Taoist insights. Merton found in the Zen doctrine of the interchangeability and synonymity of Being, Seeing and Acting, "a surprising Trinitarian structure that reminds us of all that is most characteristic in the highest forms of Christian contemplation." Woodcock is surely right when he says, "But it seems to me that in all this Merton is dealing in analogies too remote to be meaningful."

> *Yet, though he might see the monk as a marginal man, and foresee the dissolution of monastic structures, and doubtless be prepared to become a kind of spiritual displaced person if the need arose, Merton clung to Gethsemani with the kind of emotion that attaches one to a home, a family, a native landscape.*
>
> —Thomas Merton: Monk and Poet

Interesting questions emerge at such points. Increasingly, Merton observed the global unity of mystical insights, despite differences of culture, whilst insisting on the uniqueness of the Incarnation. He could go a certain way along the Eastern road, a long way perhaps, but only so far. One does get a sense from Mr. Woodcock's sympathetic but informed and occasionally critical account that Merton's intellectual generosity made him try as far as possible to adopt attitudes that seem, on the face of it, mutually irreconcilable. Throughout his life his concern was with what was contemplative, mystical and profoundly individual, as opposed to the merely social and inauthentic. Yet, by the mid-sixties he was, like many liberal Catholics, adopting political attitudes on such matters as Vietnam and racial justice, engaging at times in some injudicious rhetoric, as when he accused a white liberal friend of heading for totalitarianism and acquiescing in the liquidation of the blacks. Ideas change, and it is a sign of a living thinker when they do change. But one doesn't get much sense in this book of how far Merton was aware of conflicts and gaps and self-contradictions in his thinking. A practitioner of contemplation on a high spiritual plane, living in detachment from the world, was he also a little inclined to an uncommitted contemplativeness on the lower plane of ideas? These are hints and implications that I picked up from Mr. Woodcock's generally excellent book; it would take a different kind of study to enlarge upon them. Merton spoke in one way to the '40s, at the beginning of his life as a contemplative and religious teacher; and in another way to the '60s, towards the premature end of it. Time will tell what he has to say to the future.

Imbued with the mysteries

GODEL, ESCHER, BACH:
AN ETERNAL GOLDEN BRAID

Douglas R. Hofstadter

Basic Books, $18.50 777 pp.

James Gips

Gödel, Escher, Bach is a wondrous book that unites and explains, in a very entertaining way, many of the important ideas of recent intellectual history.

"In a way, this book is a statement of my religion" the author writes at the beginning of the book. It is a "religion" that I and many other people share with him.

Like any religion it has its faith and its mysteries. Central to the faith is belief in logic; in mathematics, in computers, in rational thought. There are many books

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that are imbued with the faith of this religion. *Gödel, Escher, Bach* is imbued with the mysteries.

A central mystery is what Hofstadter calls "Strange Loops." "'All Cretans are liars' said Epimenides the Cretan" is an ancient example of a Strange Loop. "A set that contains itself" figures in Russell's Strange Loop. "All consistent axiomatic formulations of number theory include undecidable propositions" is Hofstadter's paraphrase of Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem, the proof of which contains a crucial Strange Loop. "Can a mind (or computer program) fully understand itself?" is a contemporary Strange Loop. "A religion based on a faith in rational thought" certainly has the seeds of a Strange Loop, especially if a central mystery of the religion is that of the Strange Loop itself.

Hofstadter begins the book with discussions of the three men whose names form the title. Gödel's theorems and proofs, Escher's drawings, and Bach's compositions contain Strange Loops but are seen to be connected even more strongly. "Finally I realized that to me, Gödel and Escher and Bach were only shadows cast in different directions by some central solid essence. I tried to reconstruct the central object, and came up with this book" (p. 28).

Preceding each of the chapters of *Gödel, Escher, Bach* is a dialogue. The principal characters of the dialogues are Achilles and a Tortoise, the protagonists of Zeno's fifth century B.C. paradox. Other characters enter the "dialogues," including a crab, Zeno, Charles Babbage (the 19th century English inventor of the computer), and "a brilliant young computer program" named SHRDLU. These dialogues are immensely entertaining. They introduce in rather fanciful ways the ideas presented in the succeeding chapters. Or, are the chapters merely footnotes to the dialogues? Not only do the dialogues present the ideas, they embody the ideas as well. Some dialogues have the structure of particular Bach compositions. The structure of the dialogue "Little Harmonic Labyrinth" explains the critical idea of recursion as well as any English description could. (Though, I am reminded of the famous two-word dictionary definition of recursion: SEE RECURSION.) The dialogues, and the chapters of the book, are full of word play, musical puns, and logical puzzles. What English word begins with HE and ends with HE? (Besides the word HE itself?) What is the rule for the sequence 1,3,7,12,18,26,35,45,56, . . . ? This sequence is a fascinating exercise in the relationship of figure and ground.

The content of the book effectively traces a major line of thought in the twentieth century. The first part is concerned largely with ideas developed in logic, mathematics, and formal systems during the first half of the century. In the second half of the century, I at least believe,

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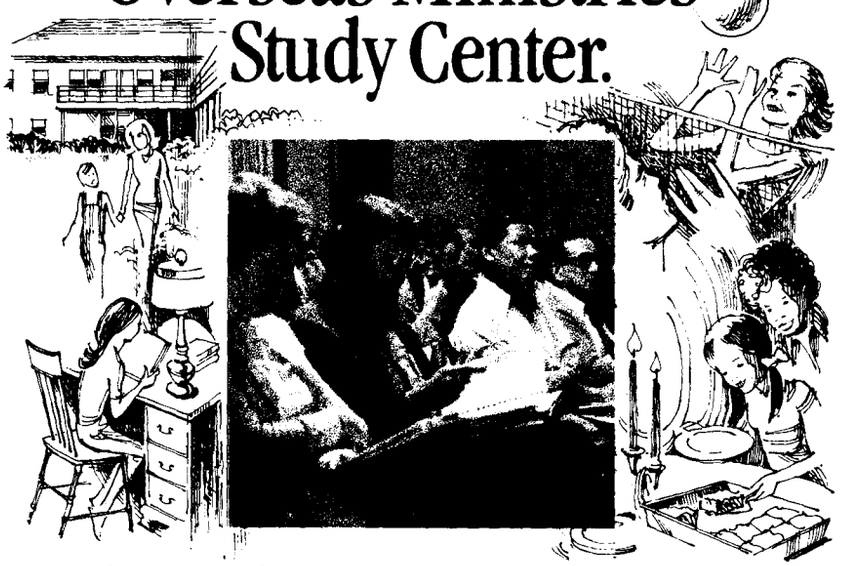

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there has been an important shift of focus to computers and Artificial Intelligence. The second part of the book concentrates on ideas from these fields.

Artificial Intelligence is the field in which people design computer programs that enable computers to perform tasks that we normally consider to require intelligence. The idea is this: If we truly understand some process (seeing, understanding English, diagnosing medical problems, creating works of art) that requires intelligence, then we can write a computer program that embodies that process. Further, by attempting to write these programs we enhance our understanding of the processes themselves. The question "What are the theoretical limits of Artificial Intelligence?" then is the same as "What are the limits of rational thought?"

People are potentially understandable at many levels (psychological, biological, biochemical, . . .) Computers too are understandable at many levels. While the levels of people and computers do not precisely correspond, Hofstadter emphasizes that just understanding the interactions between the levels of a computer can help us understand ourselves and the world around us. Indeed, this idea of a hierarchy of levels of understanding is crucial to Hofstadter's investigation of Strange Loops. Strange Loops result from what Hofstadter calls "Tangled Hierarchies," from mixing the levels of understanding. To illustrate this point, Hofstadter himself enters the final dialogue and shows a copy of the book to the characters. Thereupon the characters and the author discuss various aspects of the book.

Implicit in the concept of Strange Loops is the concept of infinity, since what else is a loop but a way of representing an endless process in a finite way? And infinity plays a large role in many of Escher's drawings. Copies of one single theme often fit into each other, forming visual analogues to the canons of Bach. Several such patterns can be seen in Escher's famous Metamorphosis. *It is a little like the "Endlessly Rising Canon": wandering further and further from its starting point, it suddenly is back.*

Douglas R. Hofstadter
—Godel, Escher, Bach

Gödel, Escher, Bach begins with a weaving of three strands—the works of Gödel, Escher and Bach. Succeeding chapters explain and relate important ideas from the mathematics, logic, philosophy, and computer science in a playful, entertaining, insightful, and understandable way. Along the way there are excursions into Zen, DNA, particle physics, and ant colonies. Throughout the book we are treated to drawings by Escher, by Magritte, and by the author, and to compositions by Bach and to the marvelous dialogues. Hofstadter develops novel insights and interconnections. By the end of the book the author skillfully was woven many strands into a fabric containing an important portion of modern thought. To switch to a stronger metaphor of Hofstadter's, each of the ideas is seen to be a choice in a fugue, containing variations of the same themes, all forming a harmonious whole.

Realization of a timeless present

O HOLY MOUNTAIN!

JOURNAL OF A RETREAT
ON MOUNT ATHOS

M. Basil Pennington, O.C.S. O.

Doubleday, $13.95, 291 pp.

Eric Cochrane

NOTHING is more gratifying than to have someone follow your advice, particularly if he is unaware of doing so. Upon my return from a brief visit to Mt. Athos several years ago I suggested ("Thoughts from the Holy Mountain," *Commonweal*, June 30, 1976) that the only legitimate motives for going there were religious. Fr. Pennington went not just on a pilgrimage, as I did, but on a retreat, one, indeed, which he had carefully prepared in advance; and he stayed not just for the ten days usually accorded to pilgrims, but for some three months. So completely did he dedicate himself to the purposes of his retreat that he paid almost no attention to what secular visitors hold to be the Mountain's chief attractions: frescoes, manuscripts, architectural monuments, and even—except when a particularly brilliant sunset or an especially violent storm struck his balcony at Simonos Petras—the spectacle of nature. I also suggested that prospective visitors acquire at least the rudiments of the Greek language. Fr. Pennington had learned modern Greek *(dimotiki)* well enough to carry on the most intimate conservations, and he had learned enough Byzantine Greek to participate fully in the liturgies. I further suggested that they acquaint themselves with Orthodox religious traditions. While he was there, Fr. Pennington read all the ancient and Byzantine Church Fathers that he had not read before—at least to judge from his many quotations from them. And he was already so well acquainted with the particular forms of Athonian religiosity that he could understand the spiritual potentialities even of the "Jesus prayer," which to the uninitiate usually sounds like a meaningless repetition of a few not very meaningful words.

To be sure, a retreatant has one disadvantage with respect to a pilgrim: he is usually confined to a single monastery. Not until the end of his retreat did Fr. Pennington begin to wander about a bit; and even then what he saw remained wholly marginal to what he heard and thought. Hence, instead of turning secretarial spread into sunburned muscle, as do most pilgrims whose vocation for hiking is encouraged by being thrown out of each successive monastery the morning after their arrival, he actually gained weight. And instead of being able to meditate in solitude during some four to five hours each day on the trail, he was constantly drawn into interminable theological debates, most of which he found to be not very fruitful.

But a retreatant has many advantages that are denied a pilgrim, particularly if he is a monk. Fr. Pennington had much less difficulty bridging the gap be-

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tween life on the Mountain and life back home—which for him goes on chiefly in a Trappist monastery in Massachusetts. Indeed, one turned out to be really a continuation of the other. What was given him to read complemented what he had already read. What his hosts did was usually very similar to what his own brothers do. And having already eliminated the past from his consciousness, he had only to guard himself occasionally against the temptation to plan for the future in order fully to profit from the Mountain's greatest achievement, the realization of a timeless present.

Moreover, as an active although temporary, member of an Athonian religious community, Fr. Pennington was far more understanding of all that inevitably strikes Latins as rather anachronistic features in Greek religious life. He patiently accepted the humiliation of occasionally being "excluded like a heretic" from the liturgy and of frequently being bombarded with anti-Catholic imprecations. He quietly endured the claims of his disputants to be the only true Christians in a world full of wayward sheep—perhaps remembering that until recently Catholics often made similar claims. He reverently listened to what was told him about the virtues of certain local relics, including a hand of Mary Magdalen that maintains body temperature and emits a sweet odor. And he was no more worried than were his hosts about the problems of how forms of religious life created in the fourteenth century can survive even in Greece, the country with which they have so long been identified, at a time when most Greeks are frantically trying to turn it into a Western European industrial democracy.

Thus Fr. Pennington may not have been granted the kind of intense religious experience he was somewhat hoping for, and he may not have been able to do much to further the cause of ecumenism among those for whom even the former patriarch of Constantinople was a Latinizing apostate. But he learned much that can serve to enrich the religious life of all Western Christians, lay as well as clerical. And he has written down what he learned in the form of a diary, one in which the sense of immediacy charac-

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Summer 1980

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—**Effective Use of Weekend Formats in Youth Ministry,** Martin Moran
—**Social Justice Orientation For Youth Ministry,** Jim & Kathy McGinnis
—**The Ministry Of The Regional Or Diocesan Coordinator Of Youth Ministries,** Michael Warren
—**Youth And Social Justice,** Rev. Paul Surlis
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—**Love & Rules In Protestant Ethics,** Dr. Frederick Carney
—**Have The Roles For Making Rules Changed In Catholic Ethics?** Rev. John R. Connery, S.J.
—**Love, Sin And Compromise In Christian Ethics,** Rev. Charles E. Curran
—**Existentialism And Christian Ethics,** Rev. Thomas Fay, O.S.B.
—**Christian Ethics In Church Context,** Rev. Richard A. McCormick, S.J.
—**Love In Bernard Lonergan's Ethics,** Rev. Paul E. McKeever
—**Christian Love In Protestant And Catholic Ethics—Line Of Division,** Dr. Gene Outka
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teristic of the form is heightened by the inclusion of a number of charming drawings.

REVIEWERS

MARTIN GREEEN teaches in the English Department of Tufts University in Massachusetts. His books include *The Challenge of the Mahatmas*.

BERNARD BERGONZI is a professor of English at the University of Warwick. His most recent book is *Reading the Thirties*.

JAMES GIPS is Chairman of the Computer Science Department of Boston College and co-author of *Algorithmic Aesthetics: Computer Models for Criticism and Design in the Arts*.

ERIC COCHRANE teaches in the History Department at the University of Chicago.

Correspondence

(Continued from page 2)

take account of what people feel and are able to perceive.'' At one point he must say what he perceives and feels regarding not merely one woman's agony but millions of the human beings in the womb—the key issue of Nathanson's book. He has seen this issue more clearly than most of his colleagues at *C & C* and yet he has expressed his distress at what he calls the single-issue politics of the Catholic bishops. I suggest the very term *single-issue* and the fear of such alleged politics has a curious and interesting sociological history. Perhaps Hoyt has over the years developed some emotional ''resentiment'' to anything pushed strongly by Catholic bishops. But I am daring to push him to that form of moral judgment that Bernard Lonergan speaks of—a judgment that is terribly concrete (no longer academic), terribly efficacious (includes the political and sociolegal implications) and terribly self-transcending.

I have the distinct impression that Hoyt both appreciated Nathanson and yet regrets Nathanson. And I have to be forgiven the impression that Nathanson's terribly real and graphic description of what is really going on in this country in abortion clinics has reminded Hoyt too squarely of what he has always known. I have the impression that the back and forth is more in function of a deeper *crise-de-conscience* of an upright mind that is open to being disturbed. That is why I am daring to suggest that his review represents *a kicking against the goad* in the Biblical sense of the term.

FRANCIS X. MEEHAN
St. Charles Borromeo Seminary

The author replies

Mr. Meehan is obviously right in principle in suggesting that the content of my unconscious had something to do with the content of my review. He is also right in seeing that I have been in painful dialogue with myself on the subject of abortion (I'm glad that it shows). Whatever else I might say about psychological components of my judgment would be suspect and/or boring.

In response to Mr. Corbett: First, Dr. Nathanson's understanding of abortion, like everybody else's, is a moral conclusion based in part on biological data. Second, what the review discussed was not motives but mindset. For what it's worth, I think Dr. Nathanson was in good faith when he performed abortions and is in good faith now, when he wants criminal penalties for women who have abortions and doctors who procure them. I also think he was wrong both times and in a consistent or characteristic way.

The humanity of the fetus is real. The blight that pregnancy imposes on some women in some circumstances is real. By ignoring or denying the moral significance of the first reality in his early thinking and by granting it overwhelming significance now, Dr. Nathanson has achieved clear and simple ethical conclusions. His political-legal thinking has been similarly uncompromising—once he fought against criminal sanctions for abortion, now he wants them restored for all but life-endangering pregnancies.

It would take more space than is available to explain why I prefer murkiness to clarity on the abortion issue. (It has to do with a shaky insight that no one of the classic modes of ethical reasoning can alone accommodate the realities.) On the political aspect, the record suggests to me that partisans on either side who go for total victory invite passionate backlash and other unintended consequences. To re-borrow Bernard Lonergan's terms: Given enough self-transcendence all around, I think a concrete and efficacious *policy* could be achieved that would not coerce women but would greatly reduce the incidence of abortion. That would be victory.

ROBERT G. HOYT

Carter praise lauded

Lexington, Ky.

To the Editors: At a time when it's fashionable to down the president, I was gratified to find ''Kind Word for Carter'' [Nov. 9] by Thomas Powers.

Also, I lauded Abigail McCarthy's article which appeared several months ago, praising Carter for what he did right—at a time when he was standing very low in the polls.

Courage is one quality *Commonweal* does not lack.

SOPHIA YEH

Noise assault decried

Pittsford, N.Y.

To the Editors: Walter Donway's ''Testing ear drums'' (Oct. 26) was right on target. It is one of the few things that really *annoy* me—the blaring radios in public places. Two specific instances come to mind. One was last summer in Banff National Park where the authorities do nothing about silencing radios and loud late-hour parties in the campgrounds, *unless* there's a complaint. This is the opposite of policies in some parks, where there is frequent patrolling and the ranger enforces the quiet as part of his duty as a ranger. People do not have to go out of their way to register a complaint.

The other instance was in Rochester during a 4th of July fireworks display where the big speakers from a van's stereo system drowned out the fireworks' noise. Our solution was to move elsewhere (a rather timid response, I'll admit). But, again, the police patrol does *nothing* about ensuring public peace, unless there's a complaint. If police and other ''authorities'' (bus drivers, park rangers, etc.) do not see it as their *duty* to

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assist the public's desire for quiet, without waiting for a complaint, I fear that little will be done to stop this assault on us.

DONALD L. MUENCH

Franck defended

Wayne, N.J.

To the Editors: Rarely have I seen a review as hopelessly off target as Diana Culbertson's review of Frederick Franck's *Everyone: The Timeless Myth of 'Everyman' Reborn* (September 28). In the first place, Culbertson discusses a liturgical drama in terms of theatrical "success," castigating Dr. Franck for failing to be what he has never attempted to be, a "playwright." Culbertson's achievement of such an error was no mean feat, for both in his title and in his preface Franck identifies what he has made as "myth re-visioned," and its enactment as a "rite," a "celebration of human life."

Secondly, Culbertson judges Franck's poetic prose to be "verse" and then pronounces the verse "execrable" and "full of wearying clichés." Franck does indeed utilize some obvious rhymes here and there, but it seems perfectly clear to me that their purpose is to drive home a point with hammer-like insistence. And certainly he uses some clichés, putting them into the mouth of Everyone before the trauma that awakens him/her to the condition of being human, and especially putting them into the mouths of "Friends," "Family," and "Treasure," three of the supposedly secure havens which prove treacherous in the moment of extremity. Clichés, yes: to embody the fatuous peril of false values. Surely anyone who sets out to review a book ought to be able to recognize the deliberate use of trite phrases to achieve deliberate effects! I wonder whether Culbertson would fault Shakespeare for putting platitudes into the mouth of Polonius.

Worse yet, Culbertson manipulates quotations so that they distort and misrepresent Franck's meaning. She states, for instance, that EveryOne is a White Protestant in order to accuse Franck of "another slur at the beleaguered Wasps," whereas the text indicates that EveryOne is not only White and Protestant but also a Jewish high priest, and Pilate, and all the Caesars, Napoleons, Hitlers, and their insane followers, and even the Pope of Rome. EveryOne is exactly what the name implies: everyone.

Culbertson accuses Franck of "excessive romanticism" and "simplistic condemnation of money," citing as proof Treasure's remark that "My job is that/ To KILL man's soul." But the context indicates that Franck indicts not money as such, but rather absolute reliance on it or on any other aspect of superficial ego-constructs, those "trivial aims . . . and . . . violent futilities" which constitute *sin*.

Culbertson further accuses Franck of giving a "stereotypical view of idealistic Youth." But just before Everyone confesses to Insight that she or he has been guilty of squelching youthful ideals in the name of Christian principles, EveryOne has also confessed to narcissistic mockery of the old during his or her own youth. It seems to me that citing the positive without citing the balancing negative concerning youthful tendencies is downright dishonest.

Ultimately, EveryOne comes to see that his or her face is simply "the human face"—so self-hatred melts away, and with it all the angry rejection of others. EveryOne discovers love and gratitude, and finds that "the kingdom/ and the power/ and the glory/ are my very core." Death, when it comes to EveryOne, is not real, because "All is Life." Perhaps her greatest violation of the *EveryOne* liturgy is Culbertson's pronouncement that identifying God's Son with those who "see" God in this fashion is "quite pretentious and ultimately deceiving." That God resurrects the divine nature "eternally . . . deep in the human core" and that the Holy Spirit "makes One All" may mean little or nothing to Culbertson, but it means a great deal to many people around the world, including thousands of American Catholics, Protestants, and Jews.

I am especially bewildered by Culbertson's sneering at Dr. Franck's focus upon "NOW" as "presumably a holie tense," since the entire mystical tradition celebrates the Eternal Now and the holy instant, what T. S. Eliot calls "the intersection of the timeless with time." Can it be that Culbertson has never *heard* of that reality?

Finally, Culbertson fails to mention the resurrection and celebration sharing of the Bread of Life which concludes the *EveryOne* liturgy. She states a preference for the medieval *Everyman*, which concludes with death and an exhortation to do Good Deeds in order to hope for heaven. I wish Culbertson well in all her future strivings, but my own tastes run more toward the timeless myth reborn.

VIRGINIA RAMEY MOLLENKOTT
Professor of English,
The William Paterson College of New Jersey

The author replies

EveryOne: The Timeless Myth of 'Everyman' Reborn, whether poetic prose, drama, or liturgical rite is quite simply an ill-conceived and badly written

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text. *Everyman* is a splendid and timeless text, whether or not one subscribes to its medieval conceptual structure. For my understanding of time and mysticism, see my article "Process Theology and Western Mysticism," *Listening* 14 (Fall 1979), 204-222. Neither in idiom nor in insight can Mr. Franck bear comparison with Mr. Eliot.

DIANA CULBERTSON

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